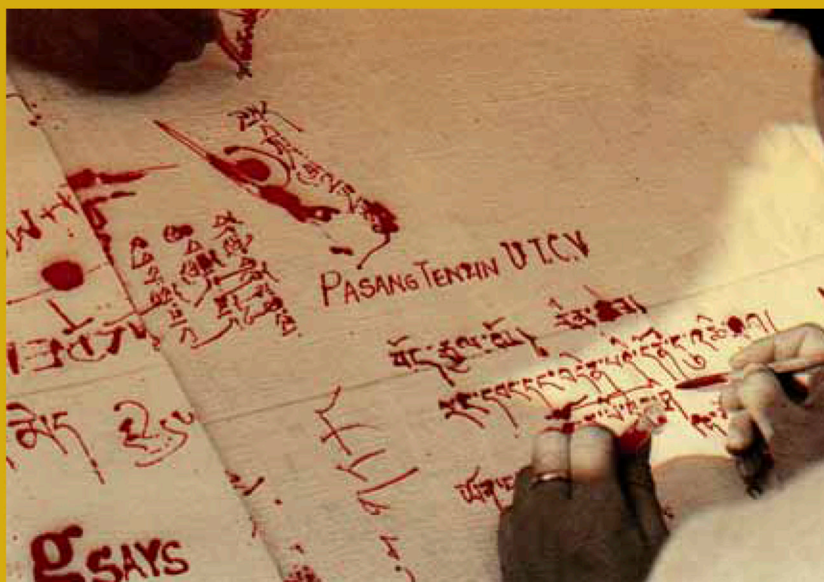
Rewriting Shangri-La

TIBETAN YOUTH, MIGRATIONS AND LITERACIES IN MCLEOD GANJ, INDIA



HEIDI SWANK

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By

Heidi Swank



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First and foremost, this book is dedicated to all of the Tibetan youth who allowed me to spend time with them, ask them endless questions, and who were so generous with their everyday bits of writing. But I would be remiss if I did not mention three other friends and family who played significant roles in getting this research to this point:

For Les and Terri without whose Nescafe, Tiger cookies, and much needed conversation my fieldwork would not have been as successful.

And for Scott my in-house editor, constant support, and sympathetic critic.

CONTENTS

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NOTES ON THE TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION OF TIBETAN

In this book, I use the THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan (Germano and Tournadre 2003) for the transliteration of Tibetan words into the Roman script. In Tibetan studies, there has been a long tradition of using the Wylie system for transcription. However, as the Wyle system includes the sometimes relatively large number of affixes that appear in written Tibetan but often do not impact pronunciation, it is necessary to have a working knowledge of the language in order to pronounce words in Wylie. The THL Simplified Phonetics system relies upon Roman letters and symbols that are for the most part well known, thus making the pronunciation of Tibetan words much easier for individuals who do not speak Tibetan. For example, the proper name Jangchup (in THL Simplified Phonetics) would be written as *byang chub* in Wylie.

In THL Simplified Phonetics, some sounds, such as aspiration, are not denoted in this system. The benefits of reaching a wider audience, though, outweigh any mispronunciations that may occur. Some of the Tibetan vowels may be a bit demanding for native English speakers, so I have provided words that contain the closest English equivalent for each of the major Tibetan vowels.

a as in *mom*
e as in *help*
é as in *say*
i as in *beet*
o as in *coat*
ö as in *book*
u as in *food*
ü as in *cue*

Under this system, most Tibetan consonants are pronounced similar to those used in English. However, there just a few that may require a bit of explanation. The pronunciation of *ng* is the bane of many beginning Tibetan language students. If you think of the phrase "si**ng a** song," focus on the bolded portion of these words and you will be able to say the word

nga 'I' in Tibetan. The 'nga' combination is common enough in English. However, it never appears in the word-initial position as it often does in Tibetan. Other more challenging consonants include *kh, ts, dz* and *zh.* The first of these can be, for our purposes, pronounced the same as *k*. The *ts* is the same as in *tsunami*. While *dz* is somewhat similar to *ts* except that the vocal cords are engaged giving it a bit of a 'harder' or voiced sound. In an analogous manner, *zh* is similar to *sh* except that it too is voiced.

PART ONE

BEGINNINGS: COMMUNITIES AND THEORIES

CHAPTER ONE

'JUST LET GO OF THIS DREAM OF SHANGRI-LA'

> But the Dark Ages that are to come will cover the whole world in a single pall; there will be neither escape nor sanctuary, save such as are too secret to be found or too humble to be noticed. [Father Perrault continued], And Shangri-La may hope to be both of these. The airman bearing loads of death to the great cities will not pass our way, and if by chance he should, he may not consider us worth the bomb.
>
> And you think all this will come in my time? [queried Conway].
>
> I believe that you will live through the storm. And after, through the long age of desolation, you may still live, growing older and wiser and more patient. . . . Beyond that, my vision weakens, but I see, at a great distance, see also a new world stirring in the ruins, stirring clumsily but in hopefulness, seeking its lost and legendary treasures. And they will all be here, my son, hidden behind the mountains in the valley of the Blue Moon, preserved as by miracle for a new Renaissance . . .
>
> *Lost Horizon*, James Hilton (1933)

> [Tibet] would be a place where people from all over the world could come to seek the true meaning of peace within themselves, away from the tensions and pressures of much of the rest of the world.
>
> *My Tibet*, H.H. The Dalai Lama (1990)

> The main objective of any human being should be to make the best out of their life and I suggest we let China have Tibet. That is all it takes. Just let go of this dream of Shangri-La and let us all focus on being happy with what little we have rather than loosing [*sic*] everything else in the pursuit of regaining what was ours once.
>
> *Phayul Forum*, Kunsung (2008)

In James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* the monastery of Shangri-La is placed among the mountains of the Tibetan plateau, a location that in the early 1930s, when the novel was written, seemed inaccessible to the vast majority of people. The idea of Shangri-La as a utopic and restful repository of all that is good in the world emerged in the West in the midst of the Great Depression, when much the world wanted to believe that their lives would improve. It was in Shangri-La that tradition was being safeguarded. It provided stability in unstable times.

It is this idea that "lost and legendary treasures . . . [will be] preserved as by miracle for a new Renaissance" that has drawn the imagination of

many, especially in the West. “Shangri-La promised to be an escape from all suffering, even death, a haven where wisdom could outlive passion, and the meek could inherit the earth” (Frechette 2002, 96). Over the more than seventy years since Hilton gave a name to existing abstractions of Tibet as a utopia, this notion has expanded to include the right to self-determination, environmental protectionism, conservation of indigenous knowledge, and the championing of multiculturalism (Frechette 2002). Toni Huber, in a paper tracing the history of environmentalism among Tibetan exiles, suggests that Shangri-La is often raised to distance Tibetans “from the ‘evils’ of modern society” (1997, 113). This distancing provides the West with an imagined escape from modernity and globalization (Nielsen 2000; Lempert 2007). Such discourses, offers Jan Magnusson (2002), are an example of Lila Abu-Lughod’s ‘reverse orientalism,’ turning what orientalist perspectives devalue into an object of admiration. “Reverse orientalism can be understood as a social mechanism helping the Tibetans in their attempts to manipulate certain aspects of Tibetan culture that the West admires, wants and values to influence the issue of Tibet” (202–3). These escapist, utopian notions about Tibet were largely propogated by the Dalai Lama’s government or Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), even though these ideas initially came from outside the Tibetan community (Huber 1997; Lopez 1999; McKay 2001; Barnett 2001; Prost 2006; among others), with people such as Richard Gere among their most vocal advocates.

In recent years Tibetan intellectuals, such as Dawa Norbu (1987) and Jamyang Norbu (1994), some CTA officials like Lodi Gyari, as well as several Western scholars (Bishop 1989; Neilson 2000; Dodin and Räther 2001; Magnusson 2002; Klieger 2006; among others) not to mention the Amnye Machen Institute[1] in McLeod Ganj, have worked to dispel myths of Tibet’s unique and utopic past, often pointing out that such a characterization of Tibet and Tibetans obscures the serious human rights abuses occurring in Tibet.

Despite these efforts to move away from discourses that frame historic Tibet as a utopia, popular discourses on both sides of the Himalaya, not to mention those of the exile education system, continue to keep such notions alive (Norbu 1994). For instance, youth living in Northeast Tibet

[1] The Amnye Machen Institute was formed in the early 1990s with the intent of examining Tibetan history, culture, and politics from a scientific perspective. Among these aims is the investigation of foreign ideologies over the course of history, such as the myth of Shangri-La.

often frame exile in India as flowing with milk and honey (Charlene Makley, pers. comm.). Such a depiction of exile taps into not only a belief that economic opportunities abound in exile, but also that a community of Tibetan exiles offers inclusion and belonging. More significantly, though, is the maintenance of an implicit Shangri-Laization[2] of pre-1950s Tibet by the Tibetan exile education system, most obviously through their textbooks and associated publications that the CTA's Department of Education began developing in the 1980s. For example, the excerpt below from a story entitled "Save the Environment," which I examine in greater detail in chapter 5, was taken out of a magazine entitled *Gang Jong*[3] or 'The Land of the Snows' published for primary school students by the Department of Education.

> By and large, Tibet had many beautiful animals. . . . The yaks and *dris*[4] almost always stayed on the grasslands and in the mountains, while the pandas stayed inside the bamboo forests. . . . The history of the Tibetan people is in all of the living beings in our country, The Land of the Snows. (Central Tibetan Administration 1997, 12–13)

This story appears with a two-page illustration of a lake surrounded by grassy fields and mountains. There are two yaks on one shore of the lake and a bamboo forest on the other shore with two pandas peering out from among the stalks. The story goes on to attribute environmental degradation to the Chinese occupation, suggesting that Tibetans lived in harmony with their environment. Such discourses, which are common across exile educational publications, construct pre-1950s Tibet as a utopia.[5] These environmentalist depictions are not exclusive to exile educational publications. Instead, they are part of a larger project of the CTA to create literature that depicts Tibetans as a 'green' populace (Huber 1997), who lived in balance with nature before the Chinese invasion.

For diasporic populations, such idyllic identifications of their pre-exile homeland are not uncommon. Discourses that circulate among youth in Tibet and emerge out of the exile education system work to construct a mythico-history (see also Yeh 2007) similar to that which circulated

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[2] The exile education system does not use this term to describe the new curriculum put in place in the mid-1980s. Instead, the term *Tibetanization* is used. However, the aims of what is called *The Tibetanization Program* (CTA 1999) employ an implicit perspective on pre-1950s Tibet as a Shangri-La of sorts.

[3] *Gang Jong* is another name for Tibet.

[4] A female yak

[5] Diehl 2002; Frechette 2002; Huber 1997; Nowak 1984; among others.

among the Hutu refugees investigated in Liisa Malkki's (1995b) *Purity and Exile*. From particular perspectives in both the Hutu and Tibetan exile contexts, exile is regarded as the only means for maintaining their practices and beliefs as 'authentically pure.' In this way, the Tibetans' exodus from Tibet allowed them to imagine exile as preserving a 'pure' Tibetan society away from the persecution and oppression occurring in Tibet. In addition, this maintenance of their practices and beliefs lends them, in their perceptions, a level of authenticity that has been lost on the Tibetan plateau through what some exiles see as a 'Sinicization' of Tibet. Lastly, such work of preservation is commonly regarded as eventually culminating in a return to a free Tibet. Taken together these views of exile allow for the geographic dislocation of Shangri-La, for pre-1950s Tibet is embodied in the exiles themselves, the exile institutions created, and through stories, practices and beliefs passed on to children in exile. It is such ideas of exile that allow not only for the imagining of pre-1950s Tibet as a Shangri-La but also for the shifting of its location to exile.

For the most part, these discourses are not explicitly voiced in terms of Shangri-La. However, such ideas do emerge out of utopic notions of Tibetanness that place McLeod Ganj, as the seat of the Dalai Lama's government, as the best viable alternative to being in pre-1950s Tibet. As Emily Yeh suggests, "although it is considered a 'temporary resting place' for Tibetan culture before its inevitable return home, some Tibetans have begun to see it, rather than Lhasa, as the center of Tibetan symbolic geography and as the locus of authentic Tibetan culture. Being from Dharamsala, not Lhasa, becomes the mark of pure Tibetan-ness, in geographical proximity to Dharamsala, rather than to Lhasa, is a measure of one's Tibetan-ness" (2007, 662).[6] Thus, this imagination of Tibet "as a domain in which ancient wisdom was held for safekeeping until the modern age" (Lopez 1999, 179) has shifted and been re-imagined in exile and for some specifically in Dharamsala and McLeod Ganj.[7]

[6] See also Prost (2006).

[7] Julia Hess (2009, 70) states that "Tibet has come free of it bounded, geographic territory." In a similar vein, Keila Diehl (2002) suggests that the United States is a surrogate Shangri-La for Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj. In this argument she discusses the role of Western sponsors, American rock music, and 'Inji (lit. "English") Fever' that followed the 1990 U.S.-Tibet Resettlement Project. In particular, she examines the importance of the United States as something of a Shangri-La due to the dissemination of rock-n-roll music worldwide. I agree that this sort of Shangrilaization occurs in McLeod Ganj. Here, however, I focus on the ways in which educational discourses also frame exile as this Shangri-La.

Rewriting Shangri-La

Messages, such as the one above from *Gang Jong* about the many beautiful animals of Tibet, are prevalent in the educational materials used in Tibetan exile schools from the Tibetan Children's Village schools (TCV), which educate many of the children raised in exile, to the Tibetan Transit School (TTS), whose student body is made up of teens and older youth recently arrived from Tibet. These messages echo many of the sentiments of the CTA and socialize children and youth to think of exile as the best available alternative to pre-1950s Tibet or at least the best present-day option for Tibetans.[8] We know that education and its associated texts can, in no small way, shape how we see the world and our place in it.[9] Thus, it would be unsurprising if Tibetan exile youth largely understood exile in these terms.

The early 1990s, though, brought about significant changes in the lives of youth in McLeod Ganj outside the school. These changes precipitated challenges to the messages of cultural preservation in the exile education system. In 1991, a severe financial crisis brought about a privatization of media in India, allowing for an influx in Western television programming. Moreover, as telecommunications providers multiplied in post-1991 India, Internet and cell phone access expanded into McLeod Ganj. Such changes brought in new ideas, new ways of being that were appealing to many youth in this rural town. These shifts were experienced in concert with an ever-growing tourist business as foreign tourists arrived in McLeod to 'see Tibetans' or attend one of the many meditation centers in town. This increase in access to information and people from and about the world began and continues to compete with the messages of cultural preservation and heritage taught through the educational system (Swank 2011).

This tension that exists between the messages of the educational system and those of Indian and international media forms the backdrop to the

[8] Keila Diehl (2002, 18) similarly states, "Children and youth are those for whom the Tibetan government-in-exile's policies, the refugee community's concern about the future of Tibetan culture, and the identity-challenging realities of life in exile come together most complexly. A tension between the self-conscious honor/burden of being the bearers of their heritage and the seemingly unlimited opportunities for innovation in exile informs the socialization of Tibetan refugee children from the moment they are born and has been institutionalized in the structure of their schools. Despite a well-articulated academic curriculum and general commitment to cultural preservation, what is taught is not passed on unchanged, since Tibetan refugee youth are living undeniably, displaced, fragile, and culturally hybrid lives."

[9] Bourdieu and Passeron (1977); Phuntsog (1998).

everyday lives of the Tibetan youth on whom this book focuses. Yet the picture is more complex than just the divergent messages that these sources present. The ways in which these youth consume these messages and media are not uniform across McLeod Ganj. Instead, their consumption is informed by their migration experiences. As a community whose history is linked in profound ways to migration from Tibet into India, the varying migration histories present in McLeod, ranging from being born in India as the child of parents who migrated to having themselves migrated into India only months or years prior, shape how these youth utilize such messages to negotiate identities and relationships. It is in this complex interplay of educational rhetoric, media messages, and migration histories that these youth orient themselves to exile as a surrogate Shangri-La. In these pages, we will encounter some youth who continue to view exile as a best alternative to pre-1950s Tibet, others who had hoped for a Tibetan Shangri-La only to become disaffected and marginalized, and of course others who position themselves between these two polemic orientations. In particular, I pay attention to the ways in which different groups of Tibetan refugee youth orient themselves to exile, with a particular focus on their everyday forms of writing (e.g. personal diaries, emails, poetry). Thus, this book examines the differences in experiences of exile among Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj, India to suggest that an individual's relation to migration impacts how they write in their everyday lives, in essence, how these youth, with sometimes distressing and sometimes encouraging outcomes, are rewriting their Shangri-La.

Book Overview

This book is divided into three parts. The first portion entitled "Beginnings: Communities and Theories" is comprised of this chapter and two additional chapters. In the balance of the current chapter, I introduce McLeod Ganj and its residents locating them geographically (within Dharamsala and India) and socially (as a community of refugees and exiles). I also briefly examine some of the more significant changes that made the generation of youth on whom this book focuses rather notable in the history of the Tibetan Diaspora. The second chapter "Youth Communities and Methods" delves into the notion of an individual's 'migration trajectory' (Berg 2009) in order to understand this significant influence on youth identities and community membership(s). I also introduce the three communities of Tibetan youth impacted by their respective migration trajectories in McLeod Ganj: Born Refugees (Hess 2009), Semi-Orphans, and

New Arrivals. I finish this chapter with a discussion of methods I used to better understand these communities that are divided, for the most part, by migration statuses. In the final chapter in this section, "Theories of and in Practice," I delve into the main theories that underpin this book. I define two concepts *communities of practice* and *structure of the conjuncture* to examine their intersection and develop a theory of social change. In this chapter, I also tease out the differing rates at which social change can occur with the concepts of *slippage, drag*, and *change.* I conclude this chapter with several vignettes that highlight each of these concepts.

The book's second section is called "Histories and Writings of Kyamkyam and Shapshu." Like the first part of the book, this portion contains three chapters. The first, titled "Come to Learn, Go to Serve," examines two ideas central in the everyday discourses in McLeod Ganj: *kyamkyam* (roaming about) and *shapshu* (service). Through an examination of these concepts, I demonstrate the interrelatedness of kyamkyam and shapshu. Moreover, I show how these concepts and the actions to which they refer figure into the divisions among Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj. In chapter 5, "Learning to Kyamkyam and Shapshu," I examine divergent orientations to shapshu and kyamkyam as linked to the educational history of Tibetans both in McLeod Ganj as well as inside Tibet. In "Writing Divisions," chapter 6, I analyze several writings by Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals to show how in these writings they not only recreate divisions between these communities but also effect social change.

The third portion of the book is made up of chapters 7, 8, and 9. It is entitled "You Can Live without a Brother, but not without a Friend," which comes from a poster in one of the schools attended by Semi-Orphans. Chapter 7 explores the historic role of family in Tibetan society and how this role has changed with migration into exile. I examine the divergent ways in which family is constituted in exile, classing them with respect to their migration trajectory as *family-near, family-far*, and *family-absent*. I then introduce several writings from members of each youth community to demonstrate the negotiation of these familial relationships through everyday writings as well as linking these writings to ongoing social changes. Chapter 8, "Friendship in Tibet and Exile," takes a similar approach but focuses on the importance of friendship in both historic Tibet and exile. I then present several writings by Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals to highlight the importance of these everyday literacies in recreating divisions and social change. In the final chapter, I return to the discussion of Shangri-La to pull together the ways in which writings linked to the main themes of this book, namely roaming & service and family & friends,

are renegotiating exile in divergent terms across these three communities of youth, divergences that are effecting social changes in McLeod Ganj.

All stories, however, have a beginning. In the section that follows, I take the reader back to 1999 when I first arrived in McLeod Ganj. Like many who study Tibetans, I first arrived in McLeod Ganj with a particular almost utopic perspective on Tibetans. However, what I learned and came away with was far more interesting and complex than such a utopia.

My Arrival

I first arrived in McLeod Ganj in mid-June of 1999 just before the start of the annual monsoon season. Through my Tibetan language teacher in Chicago I had secured an apartment in what was then housing for foreign researchers near the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. The apartment overlooked the library itself as well as out over the Kangra Valley, a view that proved amazing during the monsoon storms. I was only staying for five weeks to conduct pre-dissertation research and continue with my Tibetan language study. After settling into my apartment, I appeared at the education office at the library hoping to get into the intermediate Tibetan language class only to learn that during the monsoon only the beginning and advanced language classes were offered. After consultation with the director, he decided that I could try the advanced language class because most of the beginning class dealt with learning the Tibetan alphasyllabary with which I was already familiar.

The advanced Tibetan class turned out to be more difficult than anticipated, however, I continued to attend making slow but steady progress. The class was comprised of several other foreign students as well as two Tibetan nuns and one young Tibetan man. I was told by the teacher, Gen Jampa-la,[10] that the three Tibetans in the class had recently arrived from Tibet and were studying at the library to learn how to write in Tibetan.

At the start of each class, it was common for Gen Jampa-la to ask each student a question. One day he asked me, “Kesa kare kare che be?” (‘What did you do yesterday?’) I answered, “nge drog-mo gi khang-pa la chin ba yin. Je la kyamkyam la chin ba yin.” (‘I went to my friend’s house. Afterward, I just wandered around.’) Upon completing the utterance, the teacher looked at me with such reproach that I assumed I had made a serious grammatical error. However, instead of correcting me, he lectured

[10] Names of individuals have been changed as have some minor details in an effort to maintain individual confidentiality.

me and the rest of the class about the dangers of kyamkyam 'roaming around'. He told us that youth spend too much time engaged in kyamkyam to the detriment of our families and our reputations. He went on to say that it would be best if we did not wander about town but went directly home to our families.

Over that summer and the subsequent year and half I spent living in McLeod Ganj conducting research for this book, such advice regarding kyamkyam has been repeated to me many times. Often advice about kyamkyam suggests alternate activities, most often staying at home or engaging in pursuits that serve the Tibetan community in some way. These discourses create expectations of what actions are appropriate for Tibetans, leaving youth with the tricky task of balancing the desire to kyamkyam (and thus hang out with friends) and to meet the expectations of their elders and community. For example, during the two months I lived with a Tibetan family, the father of the family, Kalsang, often voiced his concerns about his daughters endangering their reputations by engaging in too much kyamkyam. He limited their excursions outside the house, saying that staying at home with family and not spending time with friends was important. The eldest daughter Dolkar, however, was allowed to attend a vocational class in the main market of McLeod Ganj to which I often accompanied her. At school Dolkar learned to sew chuba, a garment that is particular to Tibetan society. Her father hoped after she finished classes that she would be able to "serve the Tibetan community," a phrase ubiquitous in McLeod Ganj and discussed in later chapters, by making chubas for local women, thereby, contributing not only to the community but also to the family's economy. At the school, Dolkar had many friends who she would from time to time meet briefly and clandestinely at a café or have over to the small room we all shared. Thus, she was able to balance her family and friends as well as engage in kyamkyam and aspire toward one day serving the Tibetan community. It was these and other similar experiences that brought out the importance of the notions of friends and family as well as kyamkyam and service among Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj.

After moving out of Kalsang's home and into my own apartment, these first experiences of McLeod Ganj influenced my further interactions with the youth in town. Moreover, as these themes not only emerged as salient in youths' everyday lives but also in their everyday writings I later collected, they provided me with an insight into the diversity of exile experiences at play in McLeod Ganj. Although all the youth I worked with interacted with these concepts and discourses, the details of these interactions varied significantly. It is just such variations that will be explored throughout this book.

Locating McLeod Ganj

McLeod Ganj is situated 294 miles north and west of New Delhi in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh (see Fig. 1-1).

Located in the Dhauladhar mountain range that forms the foothills of the Himalayas, it sits above the Indian plains at about 6,000 feet in amongst several enclaves and villages. There are several ways in which McLeod Ganj can be reached: airplane, train, bus, and car. The former

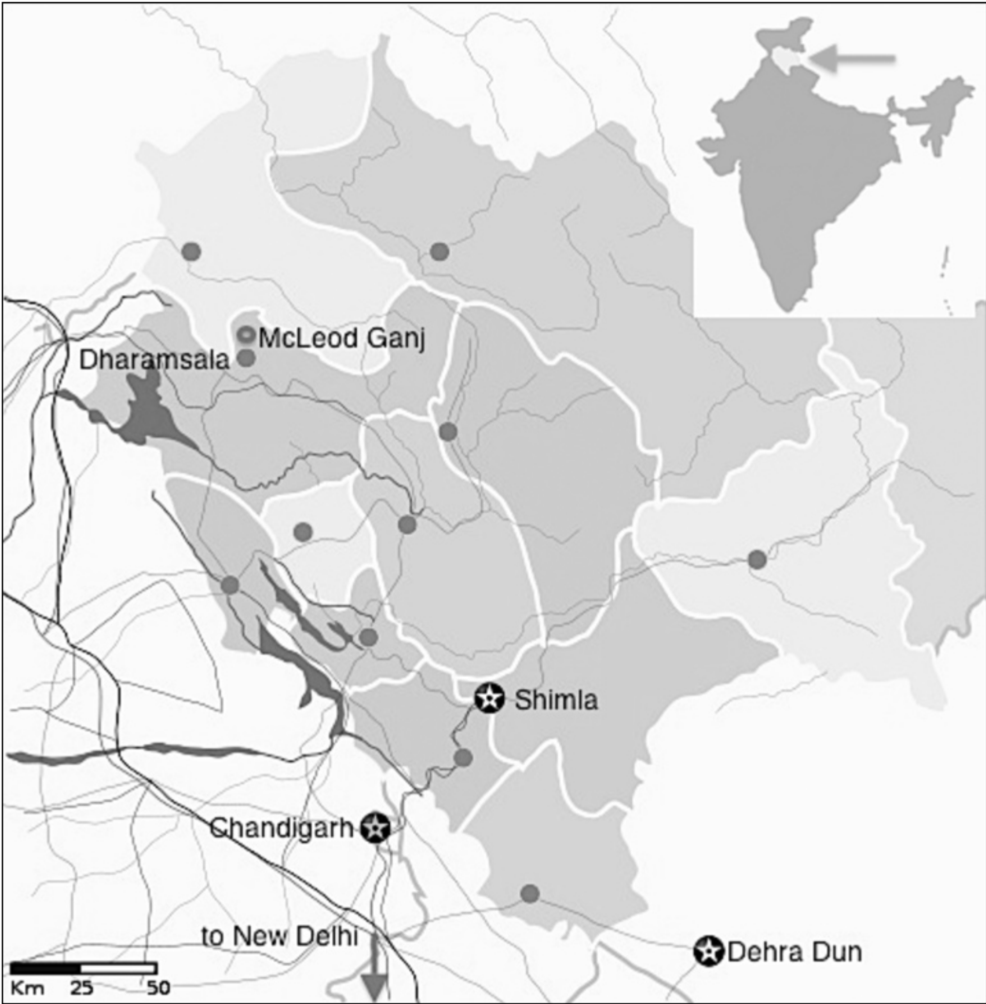


Figure 1-1: Himachal Pradesh Map

two, though, require additional transportation in the form of a taxi or local bus to reach McLeod, unlike the latter two that can navigate the twisting mountain road into the town. The bus is the most common way for Tibetans and others to come and go. From either the Delhi bus station or Manjnukatilla—the Tibetan camp outside Delhi—one can board an overnight bus for McLeod Ganj. After about fifteen hours of grasping onto and occasionally bouncing out of one's seat as the bus propels up the winding roads, passengers arrive at the tumultuous bus stand, the center of McLeod Ganj, tired, a bit dirty but happy to find themselves at last in this bustling enclave in the middle of a mountainous evergreen forest.

McLeod Ganj is a predominately Tibetan community that clings almost by magic to the side of the mountain. Buildings in myriad pastel hues appear to stack on top of each other in amongst evergreens. Only one of the six roads in town has a significant stretch that is horizontal, emphasizing the mountain quality of this community. McLeod Ganj and several other nearby neighborhoods and enclaves are part of the larger city of Dharamsala, which is situated several miles down the mountain and often referred to as 'Lower Dharamsala.' Many of the residents of McLeod Ganj use the name Dharamsala when referring to where they reside. In this book, though, I have opted for the more specific McLeod Ganj because my research was conducted solely in this enclave, not in Lower Dharamsala or other neighborhoods in this area.

Part way between McLeod Ganj and Dharamsala is the tranquil locale of Gangchen Kyishong, known as Gangkyi. This small neighborhood, where I lived during my first summer in McLeod, is home to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) as well as the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA). The LTWA houses a library of Tibetan, Chinese, and other foreign language resources. It also offers courses in Buddhist philosophy and Tibetan language that many foreigners and Tibetans alike come to take advantage of. The majority of the CTA offices are also located in this complex, and the CTA provides a limited number of apartments here for its employees. With the presence of these apartments, Gankyi is something of a small hamlet. Its relatively flat, open spaces and peaceful environment contrast with the bustling, crowded, and mainly vertical orientation of McLeod Ganj.

The views, though, from McLeod Ganj up to the mountains and down into the valley below more than compensate for the higher noise levels and population density. From my apartment high above TIPA Road, I had views out over the Kangra Valley and from my porch I could see up to the often snowcapped peaks. Rhesus macaques roam the village, stealing

laundry and religious offerings of butter and barley flour from porches and rooftops. Mornings are marked by bells and chanting from one of the many local monasteries as well as car horns and barking dogs. People stop in the street to talk or say hello throughout the day.

McLeod Ganj itself is centered on the Market or *trom* in Tibetan. The Market is made up of shops along two parallel roads that begin at the large open bus stand and are connected at the other end of the Market by a small road. In the middle of the Market is a stupa—a large mounded religious structure usually containing religious relics—around which Tibetans circumambulate in religious observance or even just use as a shortcut between the two Market roads. The roads are usually only partially paved, much of the asphalt having been washed away by the preceding year's monsoon. The only road that has been able to withstand the harsh monsoons of McLeod Ganj is the road that links the Dalai Lama's temple with McLeod Ganj. The temple complex, which includes His Holiness's residence, is a five minute walk downhill from the Market. This road used to wash out particularly badly every monsoon. According to the talk around town, Richard Gere noticed that this road was often washed out, so donated money to Himachal Pradesh to have it rebuilt. In the early 2000s, then, it underwent a massive reconstruction with new plumbing installed and using an underlayment of gravel and wire before pouring the asphalt, instead of the usual laying of asphalt directly on the dirt below. Soon after this improvement businesses sprung up on either side of the road. Today it is something of an extension of the main Market, selling foodstuffs, clothing, as well as trinkets and jewelry aimed at the tourists.

Several residential neighborhoods branch off the Market proper, with apartment buildings and houses sitting above or below the road level following the hillside. Among these neighborhoods are small shops with sundry items as well as the occasional Internet café or teashop. The neighborhoods themselves are largely unplanned and mainly filled with colorfully painted multi-storied cement structures. In among the buildings is a labyrinth of paths, stairs, walkways, and in my neighborhood a tunnel making it difficult to give directions to one's house or for a newcomer to find their way.

According to the Tibetan Welfare Office, approximately 7,000 Tibetans lived in McLeod Ganj in the early 2000s. However, this number does not take into account those who move from other settlements and do not register with the CTA. Moreover, permanent residents are often away for several months at a time for business, such as winter sweater selling, or visiting relatives and friends in other Tibetan exile settlements. During the

warm months, too, foreign and Indian tourists seem to double the population. However, in the middle of winter McLeod Ganj can seem either peaceful or abandoned as the streets empty and some businesses close for the often snowy winter.

McLeod Ganj in some ways is like many other hill stations in India. The population ebbs and flows with seasonal weather changes. In the warm months, it bustles with people and activity, while in winter it quiets and turns inward against the bitter mountain winters. In other ways, though, it is different from other mountain villages, mainly because the Tibetan residents themselves have worked to present McLeod as separate and unique to themselves, their Indian hosts, and even to a world that has long been fascinated with them.

Tibetans in India

The history of Tibetans in India is a complicated story of relationships not only between Indians and Tibetan exiles but also between multiple waves of exiles themselves. The Tibetan Diaspora began in 1959[11] when the Dalai Lama fled Tibet due to increasingly hostile treatment by the Chinese government. The flight of Tibet's leader into India engendered between 1959 and 1962 an exodus of 60,000 to 85,000 Tibetans into exile in India. As Chinese control over Tibet increased, the Tibetan border with India and Nepal was sealed, reopening decades later in the 1980s. The closure of the border during this almost twenty-year period marks the divide between what has been called first and second wave Tibetan exiles.

First wave exiles were mainly, though not exclusively, from Central Tibet where the capital, Lhasa, is located. These first exiles lived in temporary camps along the border, but soon were moved into more permanent Tibetan settlements throughout Nepal and India. As the years in exile stretched into decades, more settlements were created. Today there are thirty-nine Tibetan exile settlements in India alone, one of which is McLeod Ganj. As these first wave exiles settled into communities in India, they developed businesses—rug making, sweater selling, farming in the south, tourist-related enterprises, and the like. These exiles also comprised the initial office holders in the fledgling exile government, helped to develop schools for their children, and generally brought about much

[11] A small number of Tibetans from the upper-class left Tibet in the early twentieth century in order to settle in India and establish business ventures (de Voe 2005, 1119).

of the infrastructure of the exile communities. The children born to this generation of Tibetan exiles also consider themselves refugees.[12] They are educated in Tibetan exile schools and increasingly attend Indian and foreign universities.

Exiles who arrived in India after the opening of the border with Tibet in the 1980s comprise the second wave of Tibetan exiles. These exiles tend to come from a wider range of locales in Tibet, though many I met hail from the Amdo region in the northeast of the Tibetan plateau. Most are under the age of twenty-five and commonly leave behind parents and family in Tibet making their way into exile without familial support, financial or emotional (de Voe 2005). The reasons they give for leaving Tibet overlap with and diverge from those of first wave exiles. First wave exiles were commonly fleeing physical persecution, torture, and, for many, death. Second wave exiles, while less frequently enduring such horrific treatment, report that their parents wanted them to grow up and live outside of occupied Tibet where they might have more opportunities. These second wave exiles themselves state that they come into exile to learn about Buddhism, meet the Dalai Lama, and get an education at one of the exile institutions (de Voe 2005). Equally frequently they also offer that McLeod functions as a sort of jumping off point for the West. Thus, although the escape from Chinese government oppression is a common theme across both waves of exiles, second wave exiles also arrive in India either (or simultaneously) (1) to get an education in religion, language, and other skills that—they often mistakenly believe—might help them find employment in Tibet or the Diaspora or (2) as a point from which they may migrate further.

In terms of language, Tibetan is the most commonly spoken language in McLeod with almost all Tibetans speaking one or more of its dialects. There are three broad dialect families on the Tibetan plateau: Ütsang, Kham, and Amdo. Among these three the Amdo dialect is most often reported to be the least mutually intelligible with pronunciations diverging quite markedly from the Standard or Ütsang Tibetan. As residents of India, most Tibetans also speak Hindi, English, and various other Indian languages with varying degrees of fluency. According to many of my participants, Hindi is generally picked up from television, Bollywood films, and interactions with Indians. English, however, is taught in the exile school system beginning in late elementary school. By the time students

[12] Several scholars have commented on the 'inherited' characteristic of refugeehood among Tibetan exiles. Among these are Diehl (2002) and Hess (2009).

enter the secondary levels they are expected to have a high enough English proficiency to manage classes, textbooks, and coursework in English. The English in school is reinforced by its use in much of India. McLeod Ganj in particular, with its large tourist trade, abounds with English signage, music by artists like Bob Marley and Michael Jackson and, for a period in the 2000s, pirated English language movies were shown in makeshift theatres. With the influx of media access in the early 1990s, English language television shows, the Internet, and texting capabilities have further supplemented the use of English in McLeod.

Despite the influences of Hindi and English language texts and media, McLeod Ganj is distinctly Tibetan in a number of its community practices. In McLeod Ganj, popular Indian holidays, such as Holi,[13] are noticeable in their absence. In their place, Tibetan holidays like Losar (Tibetan New Year) and Saga Dawa[14] at times transform the village into one large festival with family arriving from far away and people visiting each other's homes. Even in the everyday McLeod Ganj is noticeably Tibetan in its practices. Older people, families, and even some youth circumambulate stupas, temples, and the Dalai Lama's compound as religious observance. Women can be seen coming and going from work wearing Tibetan chubas. However, these practices have been adjusted for life in India. Women's chubas are often made of light cottons instead of the traditional heavier brocades in response to the warmer temperatures in India. In addition, holidays, like Losar, have been shortened in duration because a multi-day interruption of work would be problematic for modern businesses that cater to tourists and interact with Indian government offices. Despite these adjustments, McLeod Ganj in many ways remains Tibetan in its experience of life in exile.

McLeod Ganj, though, is not a cultural island among its Indian neighbors. Especially among the youth in town, aspects of Indian society and culture have become relatively commonplace. Timm Lau (2010) discusses that many Indian influences have been incorporated into Tibetan exile youths' lives. From a preference for Indian foods and their frequent use of Hindi to young Tibetan men's changing ideals of feminine beauty

[13] Holi is a spring holiday that is celebrated by throwing colored powder and water on other participants. 'Participants' here is often widely and playfully construed, though, to refer to anyone who happens to be on the street during that day.

[14] The month of Saga Dawa contains the eponymous month-long holiday marking the Buddha's enlightenment. During this month, the poor flock to McLeod Ganj from all over India because merit-gaining actions, such as giving money to the poor, are believed to be imbued with 100,000 times their usual benefit.

that draw from Indian beauty ideals, living and growing up in exile has impacted how these youth see and act in the world. Lau also discusses more complex ways that living in India has become part of these youths' lives. He suggests that their preference for Bollywood movies, music, and Indian television has fostered "new imaginations of themselves" (2010, 977) that lead "young Tibetans to characterize themselves as a 'remix'" (984).

Local discourses depict McLeod Ganj as a distinct isolate in the middle of northern India. In some ways, these discourses do reflect (and are reflected in) everyday life in McLeod Ganj. Yet, especially among youth who are growing up in India in a time of massive increased access to media and media images, India is, even in the privacy of one's home, never all that distant. While some images, ideals, and practices associated with Indian society have become more prevalent in McLeod Ganj, exile Tibetans remain socially distant from Indians living near them.[15] Timm Lau also spoke about the difficult relationships between Tibetans in North India and their Indian neighbors, stating that Tibetans often described Indians as "'bad' people" (2009, 83). Such distancing is not unidirectional on the part of Tibetan exiles, instead there is a complex intermingling of mistrust and antipathy as well as empathy and gratitude on the part of both Tibetans and Indians. In the past, a few interactions between Tibetan and Indian youth have ended in violence (Penny-Dimri 1994). While such violent incidents[16] are relatively rare, both Tibetans and Indians in and around McLeod Ganj regularly voice mistrust of each other. One example, in Vignette 1-1 below, demonstrates the ways in which written language can be used to articulate distrust and reinforce these divisions. Dikyi, the shopkeeper in this story, had told me many times of her wariness of her Indian suppliers. During the time she ran the family store, she cut off business connections with Indians due to what she perceived as dishonesty, required Indian suppliers count the cash she paid them before leaving the store to avoid accusations later, and checked over each piece of merchandise, in some cases individual eggs, carefully before accepting a delivery from an Indian supplier. This is not to say that Dyiki is unusual in this respect. In fact, similar suspicions are common on both sides of Tibetan-Indian interactions.

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[15] De Voe (2005) and Diehl (2002) also discuss that Tibetans and Indians interact relatively rarely given the geographic proximity in which they live.

[16] Emily Yeh (2007) and Houston and Wright (2003) suggest that incidents of violence are also a means of dividing long-term exiles from newcomers from Tibet. Newcomers are often seen by long-term exiles as backward and more tending toward violence than the more 'refined' and educated youth who grew up in India.

Vignette 1-1: Buying Cigarettes

Dikyi tells me that she needs to go over to the bus stand to buy some more cigarettes for the store. She says there is one Indian cigarette seller, Amerjit, there who buys from the wholesaler for her. Once a week she then stops by, picks up her order from Amerjit, and pays him the wholesale price for the cigarettes. Amerjit makes no money from this exchange. This seems remarkable since I’ve heard Dikyi complain many times about the untrustworthiness of Indians.

We walk over to the bus stand, chatting on the walk about the bad thunderstorm the previous night. We arrive at Amerjit’s small cigarette stand. Dikyi removes a slip of paper (Fig. 1-2) from her pocket and hands it to Amerjit, a slight dark-skinned Indian man in his mid-thirties.

Glancing at the slip of paper, I notice that while the number of cigarette cartons is written in Arabic numerals and the name of each cigarette brand in English, there is another column of numbers written to the right in Tibetan. Amerjit takes this piece of paper and writes down her cigarette order on another slip, adds up the total costs and asks Dikyi in Hindi for 4,624 rupees to cover the wholesale cost of the cigarettes. She counts out the appropriate amount of cash and hands it to him, asking him to count it back to her. She will return later to pick up the cigarettes. Dikyi thanks Amerjit, and he hands her list back to her.

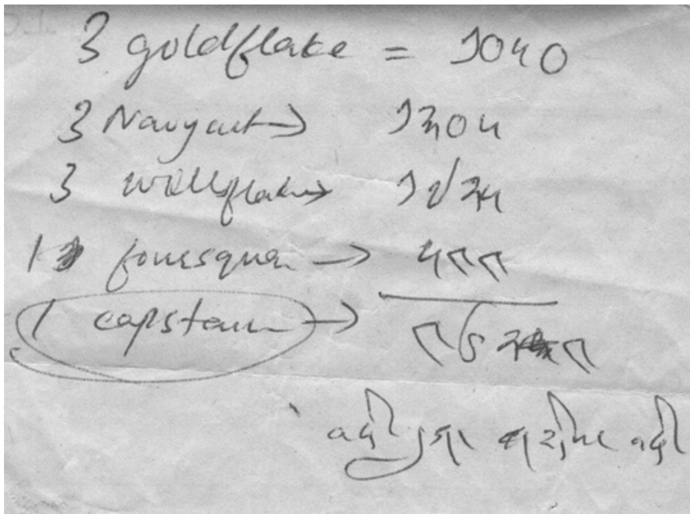


Figure 1-2: Dikyi’s Cigarette List

As we walk back to her store, she shows me the slip of paper. She tells me that the last column of Tibetan numbers refers to the total wholesale cost for each brand of cigarettes with the total for all the cigarettes at the bottom (in Tibetan numerals then repeated in words). She says that she uses this column to check Amerjit's honesty. She writes down what he should charge her. She then compares it to what he asks for. She adds that Amerjit usually gives her a little discount, in effect actually losing money by doing Dikyi this favor. I ask her if she has had trouble with Amerjit in the past. She says no, but she has had trouble with other Indians trying to cheat her.

Through the circulation of this list between Dikyi and Amerjit, Dikyi is reinforcing and renegotiating boundaries and is another form of what Lau (2009, 82) calls "a discursive strategy for differentiation."[17] Such a strategy is not necessarily engaged in purposefully but instead provides a sort of resolution to the unease of living as a minority group. For while Amerjit most likely does not read Tibetan, there are clues in this list that leave it easily interpreted. Dikyi uses the Arabic symbol for zero (i.e. 0) among the Tibetan numerals and she places a summation line under the last item. It is easily inferred that these are numbers and, more exactly, they are amounts that Dikyi has figured she should be charged for the cigarettes. Although Amerjit does not know the total Dikyi has figured, he can easily discern that she has figured the total as a check on what he charges her. Moreover, because she uses Tibetan for these numbers, he also knows that this is information that she does not necessarily want him to have. If he did have access to this information, she would not be able to test his honesty. Dikyi is not alone in her mistrust of Indians, Timm Lau (2009, 83) offers that other Tibetans have "evoked images of Indian thieves, of rude and stingy [Indian] customers."

Such doubts are common not only on the part of Tibetan exiles. On a recent visit to McLeod Ganj, I was lucky enough to have time to get to know a few more Indians living in or visiting McLeod. In our conversations, they would now and again complain about the Tibetan exiles. Some of these complaints were valid, whiles other were based in misinformation about the status of Tibetans in India. One young woman told me that she

[17] This practice of differentiation is not always discursive. As Houston and Wright (2003) note, it also takes the form of Tibetan-dominant enclaves apart from native communities.

thought (albeit mistakenly) it was unfair that Tibetans don't have to pay taxes. She was also frustrated by what she saw as a refusal to mingle with Indians, despite her coming to McLeod, in part, to visit a Tibetan friend. She saw them as freeloaders of a sort, relying upon the Indian state for benefits but not giving anything in return. In another conversation with a long-term Indian business owner in a neighboring village, it was stated as fact that Tibetan exiles refuse to become Indian citizens. While this may be correct for some, for the second wave exiles Indian citizenship is not on offer by the Indian government (Hess 2009). Among many Indians I have spoken with, there is a general perception of Tibetans in India as socially self-isolating and detached from Indian society.

It has been suggested that Tibetans' aloofness, which underlies much of the tension between them and Indian citizens, is attributable to historical notions of *nangpa*[18] 'insider' and *chipa* 'outsider' whereby Tibetans distinguished themselves from non-Tibetans. These terms over time have become synonymous with the labels 'Buddhist' and 'non-Buddhist.'[19] In the Diaspora, I offer that major social divisions no longer play out along religious lines. Instead, perceptions of social similarity, in terms of refugee status, gender relations, education, etc., are today more important in creating social divisions. For in an analogous way that Tibetans maintain a division between themselves and Indians, so, too, do first wave exiles see a divide between themselves and second wave exiles, both of which are predominantly Buddhist. Keila Diehl[20] also wrote about such divisions among Tibetans in McLeod Ganj. She was surprised by "the separate worlds refugee Tibetans and Tibetans raised in the homeland inhabit, even when living . . . in such close physical proximity" (2002, 93).

The complex relationships between first and second wave exiles as well as between Tibetans and Indians are informed in important ways by perceptions of their status as refugees in India and the emphasis placed on cultural preservation by the CTA. For although it is possible for some Tibetan exiles to become Indian citizens, as suggested by the Indian business owner above, such a move would often be perceived by other Tibetans in India as giving up on regaining Tibet or leaving behind one's Tibetan identity. Thus, for Tibetan exiles life in India in some ways is centered on divisions. Although such divisions are anything but clear, especially for

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18 Hartley (1996, 31) also notes the term *böpa* 'Tibetan' is sometimes also used in this way.

19 Schneiderman (2006) for a further discussion of these relations of synonymy.

20 These intracommunity divisions are also talked about by Hess (2009).

Tibetan youth. For although youth do not tend to build friendships with Indians or with Tibetans from a different migration wave, they do share in many of the same practices and activities, making diaspora simultaneously an experience of heterogeneity and uniformity.

Tibetans in Diaspora

James Clifford (1994, 308) in his piece entitled "Diasporas" states "the term *diaspora* is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement." I mention this definition in discussing the Tibetan Diaspora or in Tibetans' terms *exile* because this perspective grounds the experience of diaspora in the local and taps into the importance of histories and the historical in relation to displacement. Tibetans in Diaspora have been examined elsewhere in detail.[21] Here, I focus on the heterogeneity of the Tibetan Diaspora to suggest that the diversity of these everyday lives in exile is based in a complex of factors and experiences. Steve Venturino (1997) in his article "Reading Negotiations in the Tibetan Diaspora" adeptly captures various dimensions of exile diversity:

> There are Tibetans and Tibet supporters who are quite conservative, viewing cultural preservation as a hermetic operation, while other Tibetans . . . cannot envision preservation without growth and change. Some Tibetans argue for complete political independence from China, while others such as the Dalai Lama attempt to take the 'middle road' of negotiation for federated autonomy. And while many Tibetans position their protests within the broad narrative of nonviolence, there are also calls for violent means to achieve results. (1997, 103)

Clifford suggests that heterogeneity in experiences of displacement is based in the contexts of migration, the multiple when, how and where of migrating. In addition, Diehl (2002) argues that as exile stretches into years and decades, new divisions are often negotiated and old ones reemerge. Although not all Tibetan scholars would agree on its relative importance, one of the more prominent divisions carried over from pre-1950s Tibet is based on an individual's region of origin in Tibet: Ütsang, Kham, or Amdo.[22] Emily Yeh also suggests that in addition to these regional affiliations "gender, age, class, and social status (aristocrats and commoners),

[21] Most notably Hess (2009) but to a lesser extent by Diehl (2002).
[22] Goldstein (1978); Nowak (1984); Korom (1997); Diehl (2002) to name only a few.

religious and sectarian affiliation, and the lay-monastic divide" (2007: 651) were salient divisions before and after the 1950s as well as on both sides of the Himalaya.

Other divisions, such as those mentioned by Venturino above, emerged in exile. Some of these are related to place, with Tibetans in North and South India viewing each other as different in terms of identity (Houston and Wright 2003) and language practices (Diehl 2002; Lempert 2007). Moreover, with the prominence of cultural preservation in the exile government and communities, orientations as mentioned by Venturino (1997) can create fissures and variation in the community. For example, Tibetans often disagree on the amount of tolerable Western influence on Tibetan society imposed by foreign monetary sponsorship of students, individuals, and families (Frechette 2002; Prost 2006). Similar divergences can occur in domains that have been marked as important to cultural preservation, such as monasteries (Lempert 2007) and in the Tibetan arts (Harris 1997; Lukas et al. 1998; Calkowski 1991; Diehl 2002).

Yet perhaps the most common basis for divisions in the Tibetan Diaspora relates to differences in experiences of migration out of Tibet over the past fifty years. Calkowski (1997), Hess (2009), and Diehl (2002) discuss existing categories of exiles based on the era of migration. The two major waves of Tibetan exiles, which I also discussed earlier in this chapter, are the first wave exiles between 1959 and 1962 and the second wave since the reopening of Tibet's border in the 1980s.[23] Emily Yeh (2007), working in the Tibetan Diaspora in the United States, suggests that among Tibetan-Americans divergent migration routes—first wave & their children migrating via South Asia, second wave only passing through South Asia, and direct migration from Tibet—form a basis for differentiation.

I have focused this discussion of Tibetans in Diaspora on migration, exile, and differentiation because such divergences in this community are my main concern. However, these approaches to understanding division in terms of waves and routes do not tease out the social divisions that are today consequential for and among McLeod Ganj youth. In order to better understand these differences in diasporic experiences, I draw from the work of Mette Louise Berg (2009) and her discussion of belonging among

[23] Diehl (2002) also suggests that Tibetans who found their way out of Tibet during the Cultural Revolution actually form the second wave. Those who left Tibet in the 1990s, for Diehl, make up a third wave. Given the second wave's small numbers, and that these Tibetans were also escaping serious physical harm similar to first wave exiles, I group these individuals with Tibetans who escaped between 1959 and 1962.

Cuban exiles in Spain. While Berg's main concern has to do with waves of Cuban immigrants across different historical periods; she also discusses a notion called 'migration trajectories.'

For Berg (2009, 268), migration trajectories tap into "the multiplicity of historically situated diasporic experiences." Berg rejects the idea that diasporic subjects relate to a single unified notion of homeland. She suggests that for different groups homeland serves different purposes because these groups draw upon differing historical points in time in their understanding of homeland and exile. Unlike Emily Yeh's (2007) Tibetan Americans, migration route does not play such a prominent role in how Tibetans living in India experience diaspora. Among my participants, all either have experienced or imagine relatives as having taken similar migration routes into exile.

Difference among these Tibetans in India is based on incidents that were occurring in Tibet at an individual's migration out of Tibet. For example, in the Tibetan diaspora in India there are at least three diverging views of the Tibetan homeland. First, for the earliest exiles and their children there is often an idealized pre-1950s Tibet in their memories that stands as a model Tibetan society and the goal for Tibetan society in exile. For young people who have come into exile relatively recently, they bring with them real-life experiences of very recent Tibet. These experiences make Tibet both 'more real' but also do not allow for the monolithic views of Han Chinese that are at times common among the earliest exiles and their children. Lastly, there are those who are positioned to a degree between these two groups and their migration trajectories. These are young people who were sent by their parents in Tibet into exile in the 1980s and 1990s as small children. Growing up as almost orphans in the Tibetan Diaspora, they have acquired the idealized views of pre-1950s Tibet through the exile schools, but these notions are mixed with knowledge and possibly vague memories of places and people in present-day Tibet. Thus, these groups' migration trajectories (i.e. the specific historical circumstances at their time of migration) underscore both how they view Tibet and their experience of life in the Tibetan Diaspora.

Building upon Berg's concept of migration trajectories, I suggest that these are not merely links between the past (i.e. time of migration) and the present (i.e. life in exile), but they project what is possible in an individual's future. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) also discusses trajectories but in his treatment of them he suggests that where an individual begins (e.g. the politico-temporal circumstances when one left Tibet) places one on a particular trajectory in which the 'field of possibles' is limited by what

he calls social origin. In his words, "all positions of arrival are not equally probable for all starting points" (110).

Unlike Bourdieu's subjects in contemporary France, I suggest that social origin for diasporic subjects is formed chiefly by the when of their migration from the homeland. The period during which they migrated results in "a band of more or less equally probable trajectories leading to more or less equivalent positions" (1984, 110). For Tibetan youth in India, their migration trajectory has identifiable repercussions for their future as diasporic subjects. As we will see in chapter 5, it is the when of an individual's migration that places them in one of several educational institutions, which in turn prepare these young people differently and, thus, further define the 'life chances' for them.

Unlike the situations that hold for Yeh's (2007) participants, for Tibetans in India migration trajectories are not tied to geotemporal routes. In addition, Berg's trajectories of migration lead us away from the oversimplification of the experience of migration in terms of 'waves.' Instead, I offer that migration trajectories allows for the complex interplay of histories, which among Tibetan exile youth include the intermingling of age at migration, education received in exile, as well as the wave of migration.

Across McLeod Ganj youth, the education they receive in exile can vary dramatically. Moreover, such differences in education are determined by a youth's age at migration. But yet we cannot fully disregard the waves of Tibetan migrations. For leaving earlier or more recently (or for the children of the first wave, not at all) significantly shapes the individual's reasons for leaving Tibet, goals for being in exile, and perceptions of a possible return. These divergent migration trajectories are not just static categories into which youth are placed. Instead, they are negotiated in their everyday interactions and literacies.

Educating Exile

Textbooks and schooling play an important role in teaching children about the uses and social meanings of literacy. Among Tibetan exiles, there are several different schools to which a child might be assigned. Each provides an education that differs from the others with the intent of catering to the perceived needs of its students from varied backgrounds. Where a Tibetan child is assigned to attend school is dependent upon where they were born (i.e. Tibet or India) and, for those born in Tibet, the age at which they arrived in McLeod Ganj.

One institution, the Tibetan Children's Village School (TCV), educates many of the Tibetan children in exile. The TCV teaches students raised in India either from birth or, among new exiles, children who arrive in exile under the age of fourteen. In addition to the TCV, there are several schools that exclusively serve children and youth who were born in Tibet and arrive in India at age fourteen or older. Among the youth born in Tibet with whom I worked, only the Suja School and the Tibetan Transit School are represented. Both schools are located near McLeod Ganj. Thus, I limit my discussion of education for those recently arrived to these two schools. Across these different schools, the TCV curriculum and textbooks are used to varying extents. This curriculum was developed by the exile government's Department of Education, and as such it is widely regarded as the 'best' curriculum for exile children and youth.

Tibetan Children's Village Schools

The Tibetan exile education system has, since its establishment in 1960, functioned separately from the Indian system, though it receives funding from and is accredited by the Indian Ministry of Education. Over time, most of the first Tibetan exile schools became what is today known as the Tibetan Children's Village schools, of which there are almost twenty branches across India educating over 16,000 students (TCV website). In McLeod Ganj, there are two TCVs: the Upper TCV and the Lower TCV. Both TCVs are residential schools with approximately 90% of students living on campus. The Upper TCV began in 1960 and today teaches about 2000 students through class twelve. The Lower TCV was established much later in 1984. Much smaller than the Upper TCV, it teaches just over 800 students through class ten (TCV website).

In its first almost twenty-five years, the Tibetan exile schools used the textbooks and curriculum of other educational institutions in India, employing English as both the language of instruction as well as the that of textbooks and homework. As the years in exile stretched into decades, Tibetan parents became concerned about what they perceived to be a decrease in their children's level of Tibetan literacy. In 1985, in an effort to counter this perceived threat to Tibetan literacy, the Educational Development and Resource Center (EDRC) was founded near the Upper TCV by the Tibetan exile government. The EDRC's main aims were to change the language of instruction from English to Tibetan for the primary grades, design a curriculum particular to the Tibetan exile community, create textbooks and supplementary materials in Tibetan, and begin training

primary school teachers in this new curriculum (Pema 2005). Thus, the intent was to create new textbooks and curricula for all primary grade subjects. This curriculum was named The Tibetanization Program with the stated aim of creating a "curriculum that effectively links modern education with an intimate understanding of Tibetan cultural heritage and identity" (TCV 1999, 7).

In 1986, the first draft copies of these textbooks were in use in some of the TCVs, such as the Upper TCV. By 1991, fourteen of these textbooks in various subject areas were printed and being used in classrooms. Many of the youth in this book were among the first students to use these new textbooks as part of the Tibetanization of the exile education system. Therefore, these youth, unlike their elder siblings, were educated to write in Tibetan in addition to their later education in English. More than just educating children in Tibetan, this new curriculum sought to teach students, through use of pictures and images of places and objects thought of as uniquely Tibetan, to think of themselves as Tibetan. Thus, the hope had been that these young people would go on to both increasingly use written Tibetan as well as maintain an identity that was distinctly Tibetan. However, as we will learn in the following section, changes that occurred just as this curriculum was being introduced challenged many of the aims of The Tibetanization Program.

TCV Suja

Among the older children and youths who arrive in McLeod Ganj, those between fourteen and seventeen are assigned to the Suja School in Bir, located about two hours by car from McLeod Ganj. It was established in 1986 as a residential school. Following problems with overcrowding, the school was reorganized in 1990. Currently almost 800 youth attend the Suja school. At Suja, students are educated through the tenth grade with 20% of the class usually going on for two more years of secondary education. The curriculum for the first two years at Suja, called Opportunity Class I and II, moves these young people quickly through the first five school years of the Tibetanization curriculum that is used at the TCVs. After the completion of the Opportunity Classes, these young people are given help to decide on one of three programs: (1) continuation of the TCV curriculum, (2) the two-year Language Class Section focusing on Tibetan and English, or (3) the Handicraft Center in the nearby town of Pathlikuhl.

From among these, only the continuation of the TCV curriculum places students in a position to gain a secondary education diploma and possibly go on for a university education. As for the Language Section, according to the Suja principal in 2008, the majority of students who follow this curriculum return to Tibet, using their English skills to find employment in the tourist business in Lhasa. Those who are placed in the Handicraft program are usually less academically oriented. At the Handicraft Center, students study for two years and receive vocational and life skill training. Across these three programs, the principal reported that 90% of those who enter complete their studies.

The program at the Suja school provides students with a primary education that is similar to students at the TCV, albeit more accelerated covering five years of material in just two years. However, those Suja students who are determined can and do complete a secondary education.

Tibetan Transit School

The Tibetan Transit School or TTS was established in 1993, by the Tibetan Reception Center, which oversees and cares for those recently arrived from Tibet. In 2002, the CTA's Department of Education took over the Transit School. Youth who come to McLeod Ganj from Tibet between the ages of eighteen and thirty are placed in the Tibetan Transit School, which is located near Lower Dharamsala. Students at the Tibetan Transit School, like at many other exile schools, are also provided with a place to stay. Thus, this institution is both school and home. Moreover, as young people new to the exile communities, fellow students even become surrogate families.

In an interview in 2008, the principal of the Tibetan Transit School outlined the main aims of his school's curriculum: to teach students English and Tibetan. In order to achieve these aims, the first six months of the curriculum is an introduction to English and Tibetan. Students requiring more assistance with these languages enter Class I, while others move on to Class II. From Class II, basic computer skills such as using software, like Microsoft Word and Excel, as well as accessing and navigating the Internet are added to the curriculum. After Class II, students can take vocational classes for an additional two years in sewing or creating traditional Tibetan religious paintings called *tangka.* In addition to choosing one of these two vocational tracks, all TTS students continue with math, Tibetan, and English.

At the TTS, students receive a very different education than those at the TCVs or even at Suja school. Their education focuses more on learning

everyday skills for living in and navigating India. Moreover, students who arrive in exile with an education received in Tibet or other parts of China are often compelled to attend the TTS, despite their abilities in Tibetan and English at times outstripping those of their teachers (Prost 2008). Students do learn to speak English quite well and often continue their English language education at one of the many free English schools in McLeod Ganj that are staffed by foreigners and other Tibetans.

The aims of these three institutions (TCV, Suja, and TTS) were developed with the intention of addressing the diverse needs of children and youth who were born and/or raised in both India and Tibet. With such a varied population, this is no easy task. Yet it can be said that across the TCV, Suja, and Tibetan Transit School these schools are attempting to convey the message that "Tibetan children in exile share a responsibility to play a vital role in the struggle to free Tibet: they are the dream-keepers of an independent nation" (Phuntsog 1998, 36). One part of this educational endeavor is ensure that the Tibetan language, in particular Tibetan literacy, is passed on to the next generation. I conducted a survey in 2002 of over two hundred people in McLeod Ganj to, in part, learn if Tibetan literacy among these youth is more prevalent than among their elder siblings who attended school only in English. The graph in Figure 1-3 below shows the primary written language of Tibetan exiles across different age groups.

Over 60% of individuals in the 30–39 age group reported that they most frequently write in Tibetan. However, only about 40% of those in the youngest age group gave this same answer, instead giving English as their preferred written language. Given that people we interviewed who were in their thirties attended school before the use of Tibetan language in all

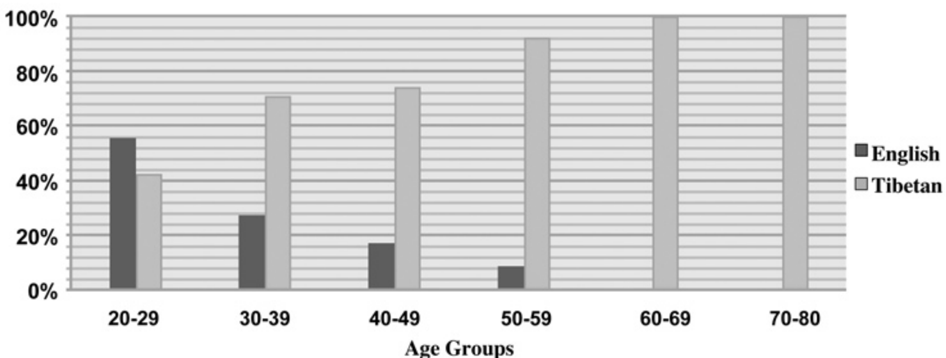


Figure 1-3: Primary Written Language by Age Group

primary grades and those who were in their twenties were among the first group to be educated in The Tibetanization Program, these results are surprising and even counter-intuitive. However, given the changes that began occurring in the early 1990s just as the Tibetanization Program was getting off the ground, it may or not be remarkable that these youth are endeavoring to be these dream-keepers while simultaneously engaging in a globalizing world.

Messages from Modernity[24]

The mismatch between the shift in the education system toward using more written Tibetan and youths' preference to use written English brought me to narrow my focus to studying youth and everyday literacies. I wanted to answer the question: Why would such a mismatch exist? A quote from Pierre Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power* played over and over in my head: "The code . . . that governs written language . . . acquires the force of law in and through the education system" (1991, 49). According to Bourdieu, then, these youth should be writing mainly in Tibetan. What was it that Bourdieu and I were missing?

I sat on the porch outside my McLeod Ganj apartment one evening just two months into my fieldwork. I mulled over this question as I wrote up my day's fieldnotes on my laptop. I was distracted by a pair of rhesus macaques that had just absconded with someone's laundry and were clambering across the metal rooftops below followed by shouts from the clothings' owner. As I tried to settle back into my thoughts, I took a minute to look across the village. I noted that on the adjacent hillside a new cell phone tower was being built, joining the two that already served the town. I thought a bit about cell phones and the Internet in McLeod Ganj. In my mind, I went back to my first visit to McLeod Ganj during the monsoon season in 1999. I recalled checking my email at Khana Nirvana, a local restaurant frequented by tourists, that at the time was one of the few places in McLeod with Internet access. There were no cell phones or towers in McLeod Ganj then. However, six years later even the poorest of my participants toted a cell phone or 'mobile' (pronounced as rhyming with *profile*) as they are generally called in South Asia. In addition to the ubiquity of cell phones, it is now difficult to walk twenty feet in

[24] I borrow this phrase from Handman (2011).

the Market without seeing an Internet café. These cafés no longer cater just to tourists but are often jammed with equal numbers of Tibetans and foreigners chatting online, surfing the Internet, updating their Facebook status, and checking email.

These recollections brought me to wonder what was happening outside the education system when the Tibetanization Program was first instituted in the early 1990s. I began looking into this period a bit more closely. Starting in the early 1990s McLeod Ganj underwent some significant changes that brought it into greater contact with the rest of India and the world. In 1990, the U.S.-Tibet Resettlement Project began.[25] The U.S. government gave the CTA 1,000 green cards for Tibetan exiles. This project marked the beginnings of what one of my participant's called the Go West Virus due to the number of Tibetans who tried to immigrate west during and after this project. Around this time there was also an acknowledgement by the Dalai Lama and CTA that the government could no longer virtually guarantee employment to the large numbers of Tibetan high school graduates. Instead, Tibetan youth were encouraged to seek jobs outside the government and the Tibetan community (Diehl 2002; Bernabei 2001). Both of these events oriented youth to opportunities outside the Tibetan exile community.

As I mentioned earlier, there were also changes occurring around this time across greater India. In 1991 India experienced a significant financial crisis that resulted in the intervention of the International Monetary Fund. As a stipulation of the IMF's assistance, India was required to liberalize the Indian economy, paving the way for private telephone, Internet, and media services (Mukherji 2009). The privatization of these services expanded cell phone and Internet service as well as brought in Western television programming and motivated the development of non-educational Indian programming.[26] The mid- to late-1990s brought the Internet and satellite television to McLeod Ganj. Access to such technology was limited as computers and satellite receivers were beyond the means of

[25] See Hess (2009) for an in-depth discussion of the U.S.-Tibet Resettlement Project and its repercussions.

[26] According to Purnima Mankekar (1999), the state-run television in India, Doordarshan, began in 1959 with the intent of creating a modern nation through the transmission of development and nationalist messages. These messages were first transmitted through news and entertainment programs and later, after 1984, through Indian serials. Although in the 1990s, the messages in these serials shifted away from being explicitly development-oriented, by 1997 transnational satellite television was bringing many other programming options into the home in urban India.

the vast majority of Tibetan residents. Yet by the early 2000s, Internet cafés had sprung up, televisions were becoming less expensive, and cable television (cheap and easy to steal) had become common.

The first private cell phone provider in India began service in 1995, with the most marked increase in usage occurring some seven years later as the erection of cell phone towers brought inexpensive cell phones to many areas of rural India. This privatization of cell phone providers also coincided with a new developments in cell phone technology, bringing about an increase in the number of cell phone subscriptions in India from thirteen million to thirty-five million between 2002 and 2004 (Mukerji 2009). While cell phones did not reach McLeod Ganj until the early 2000s, after just a few years, the number of towers in town had gone from one to four. By the mid-2000s, most Tibetan youth were able to purchase cell phones relatively cheaply and even send and receive inexpensive text messages internationally. By the time I was concluding my dissertation research, participants were reporting that texting had become their primary means of communicating with others at any distance, across town or the globe.

This series of events that occurred between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s in McLeod Ganj challenged the message of the education system by reorienting youths' attention to opportunities and ways of being that were not seen by many as Tibetan. But more than just showing Tibetan youth different ways of being in the world, these changes also made fluency in English more useful and attractive. And in the case of email, online chat, and texting, written English became important and firmly integrated into their everyday lives and literacies. In addition, this series of events, including the shift toward Tibetan language education, marks this generation of Tibetan youth as distinct from those before and after in many ways. In this book, though, I focus on how written Tibetan and English are used among these youth to negotiate their difference as a generation. For these events have shaped the themes I examine throughout this book. As we shall see, such changes have brought youth to question the long-held notion of the importance of family, integrating into their perspective the significance that friendship also now holds for them. Moreover, these changes in the exile community have altered how some youth define and think about the important notion of serving the Tibetan community. In the remainder of this book, then, I will examine how three communities of Tibetan exile youth in McLeod Ganj—being influenced by their differing migration trajectories—mediate these educational, political, and media messages in their everyday uses of literacy through the themes of family/friends and service/roaming in ways that both overlap and diverge.

CHAPTER TWO

YOUTH COMMUNITIES AND METHODOLOGIES

In the midst of these significant social changes that started in the mid-1980s and continued into the 2000s, Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj were attending school as well as participating in and consuming the influx of Indian and global media from television to the Internet to international texting. Significant changes, like these, can provide youth with experiences that differentiate them from their older cohorts. Sociologist and demographer Norman Ryder suggested that an "aggregate of individuals . . . who experienced the same event within the same time interval" ([1965] 1997, 98) develop a sense of being a distinct group or in his terms a cohort. In McLeod Ganj, such a sense of being a cohort does seem to have emerged among youth in their late teens and twenties. Not only do many more youth in this age group use English for writing than among those just five or so years older, but they are also, in my experience, more likely to be found at an Internet café or texting a friend.

While these events in the exile education system and access to different forms of media have, along with other factors, given rise to this cohort, this notion seems too homogenizing to capture the diversity of youth experiences in McLeod Ganj. Although as youth and young adults, they receive many of the same messages through education and media, some youth lived much of their childhood in Chinese Tibet, others grew up in the exile communities surrounded by family, and still others spent their adolescence mostly among other children at one of the Tibetan exile boarding schools. These differing experiences of exile as well as migration undermine the unity that has emerged, creating fissures among these youth resulting in three distinct but not entirely discrete youth communities in exile: Born Refugees,[1] Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals.

In this chapter, I will introduce these three youth communities in McLeod Ganj as well as describe how I went about studying them and their literacy practices. In each section on these communities, I describe the community as a whole and then present vignettes that highlight a portion of the everyday lives of a few members of each community. I then

[1] I am borrowing this term from Hess (2009) and will use it throughout the book.

conclude with a discussion of the methods I used to understand these intersections of youth, migration, and literacy.

Seven Tibetan Youth

In the vignettes below, we meet seven Tibetan youth: Tsomo, Tashi, Chödön, Dechen, Dolkar, Palden, and Nyima. These short excerpts from their lives highlight that exile across these youth varies greatly. Tsomo and Tashi are both Born Refugees and college educated, but differ in their orientations to Tibetan preservation. Chödön and Dechen, both Semi-Orphans, move easily across the margins of the exile community and Indian society. However, Dechen is closely linked to the CTA and Chödön to those who test the bounds of social acceptability in a conservative exile community. Among New Arrivals, Dolkar and Palden are quite typical in some ways but different in others. Dolkar doesn't speak the Lhasa variety of Tibetan common in exile nor does she make an attempt to learn it. Palden, on the other hand, is fluent in several Tibetan varieties. Dolkar spends long hours studying English, while Palden, who speaks English relatively well, all but refuses to use it. The last youth you will meet is Nyima. I have included Nyima in order to underscore the fuzziness and permeability of these youth communities. Nyima is a New Arrival; however, because he is related to a prominent McLeod Ganj family, he is able to move between the New Arrival and Born Refugee communities with varying successes. Overall, these youth highlight much of the variation present in among youth in McLeod Ganj.

Born Refugees

Among Tibetan exile youth in McLeod Ganj, Born Refugees make up the largest number of young people. Because these young people have well-established social networks, it isn't uncommon for Born Refugees to make few, if any, foreign friends among the tourists, foreign volunteers, and expatriots in town. Unlike New Arrivals, who come into exile most likely knowing no other exile Tibetans, these young people have benefited from having lived all of their lives in India as well as having their parents' contacts and ties to rely upon for employment, marriage partners, and the like.

Many Born Refugees are children of the founding generation of the Tibetan exile community. They can often tell you stories of their or their parents' experiences as new refugees in India. Dikyi, who was born in McLeod and whose cigarette list I discussed in chapter 1, told me about the experiences of her older siblings and parents when they first arrived in India. They came to McLeod Ganj in the early 1960s soon after the Dalai

Lama and his entourage was invited here by then Prime Minister Nehru. When they came to McLeod Ganj there weren't very many available houses, so Dikyi's family lived in a tent made out of tarps for a year before they could afford to build a house. They spent their first snowy McLeod Ganj winter in this tent, a clearly different experience from their lives as members of the upper classes in Lhasa. Dikyi has only seen the pictures of what she calls her family's 'first home' in India. Today, she and her parents, siblings, and extended family live in a multi-storied home in a wealthy McLeod Ganj neighborhood. Like many Born Refugees, Dikyi knows well her family's first years in India even if she is too young to have experienced it herself. For youth like Dikyi, their migration trajectories are comprised of a lack of migration or a secondhand perspective on migration. In fact, it is because of their lack of migration that they are better positioned in exile to find work, speak English fluently, go abroad, and the like.

Many of these first refugees to come into exile had been wealthy in Tibet. As wealthier individuals, the impending occupation by the Chinese government put them the most at risk, forcing many to flee. Some of these first refugees brought what wealth they could carry with them, though often these objects were sold during the first years in India to feed and house them (Norbu 1987). Consequently, many in this first generation of Tibetan exiles, then, began their lives in India in poverty. Some even worked under difficult conditions, building roads or clearing land for farming, to support their families during these first years. However, many members of this first generation of Tibetan exiles had the skills and/or education that allowed them to quickly become established in India.

According to the most recent census conducted by the CTA in 1998, among exile youth one-third of Born Refugees attend school through at least the tenth grade with 22% of these going on for a college and/or post-graduate education.[2] Because of the financial stability their family provides, they are more often able to afford not only the time off from working that

[2] The differences between 20–29 year old youth born in Tibet and those born in India in relation to education are striking (CTA 1998).

	Born in India	Born in Tibet
Primary	14%	8%
Middle School	26%	5%
Tenth Grade	13%	5%
High School	13%	4%
BA and/or Post-Grad	7%	2%
Monastic	4%	35%

college requires but also the tuition these institutions charge. Thus, Born Refugees are comparatively well positioned through their family support to find suitable employment and obtain a quality education.

Vignette 2-1: Indian Friends

Tsomo is the daughter of a well-known family from Kham. Her father, a former Khampa fighter, was a member of the escort that accompanied the Dalai Lama on his flight from Lhasa to India. Tsomo grew up in McLeod Ganj. She attended the upper TCV and went on to get her BA from Delhi University. She is taller than most Tibetan youth and wears heavy black square-rimmed glasses. She is always quick to laugh and can rarely be found sitting still. Unlike Dikyi, presented above, Tsomo does not find Indians untrustworthy but instead has had Indian friends and roommates during at least one period of her life.

When we first met, Tsomo was just settling into her new job of running the family store in a less affluent part of McLeod Ganj. Her parents rent the store space and live in a roomy apartment below it. In English, Tsomo told me she is content enough to live with her parents and mind the store. However, she often speaks of her single life in Bangalore. Immediately after graduation from university, Tsomo was hired at a high-end American clothing store in a wealthy neighborhood in Bangalore. For two years, she worked selling clothing to Indians and foreigners. She also shared an apartment with two Indian roommates. Tsomo often talks with delight about some of her late-night adventures with her roommates in Bangalore and appears to genuinely miss this time of relative financial and social independence.

While Tsomo thinks back fondly upon her days living in Bangalore, unlike Tashi below, she sees her future among Tibetans either in Tibet or one of the exile communities. She was also one of the few youth I worked with who said that if Tibet were free she would want to return there to live. Tsomo told me that she would like to go to the place where her father was born and spent his childhood. She would start a family there and be quite happy. Most youth raised in exile that I knew were less interested in returning to Tibet permanently. Instead, most expressed a desire to visit Tibet to see the country and possibly meet relatives. Some stated that India was their home, the place they knew well and loved. Unlike Tsomo, they didn't see themselves leaving it and returning to Tibet.

Vignette 2-2: Poultry and Polygamy

When I first met Tashi he appeared decidedly cool and hip. His hair was cut close on the sides. The top stood straight up and was slightly longer at the front just above the forehead. When I met him at his office, he wore jeans with chunky soled shoes and a black shirt. His leather coat was slung over the back of his chair. Having recently finished college, he took a job working for a local Tibetan language magazine, handling receipts and subscriber correspondence.

One day, he told me that he was working on getting his IC or Identity Certificate that would allow him to travel outside India. He was hoping to eventually emigrate to the United States or Canada. According to Tashi ever since the U.S.-Tibet Resettlement Project in 1991, he, like many Tibetans in India, had contracted the Go West Virus. He wanted to follow what he saw as hordes of Tibetans moving out of India to more developed countries. He had a cousin in the United States, who might be willing to sponsor him, so he was hopeful.

Just as he was about to expand on his plans for emigrating, a large chicken walked into the magazine's communal office. It began pecking at bits on the floor and then at the cable for Tashi's computer. He grumbled to himself and then yelled, "Pa-la! Cha!" ('Father![3] Bird!'). The old Tibetan man, Dorje, who made lunch and tea for the staff rushed in and picked up the chicken withdrawing quickly outside. Tashi, looking rather sheepish, turned to me and said, "I suppose I should tell you about the bird." He went on to explain that the chicken had been saved through a Buddhist act of merit making called *tsetar* 'animal liberation', which meant it would be allowed to live out its natural life instead of being killed and eaten. Soon after this tsetar, Dorje claimed that this chicken was the reincarnation of his mother. He took it in and began caring for it. According to Tashi, it went everywhere with him, including the kitchen while he was preparing lunch and tea. Tashi appeared embarrassed and ended the story with the statement: "Pa-la is too superstitious."

Anxious to change the subject, I asked him how his parents feel about his desire to go to North America. Again, he seemed to become a bit self-conscious. He said that his parents lived in Sikkim in northeastern India. He only saw them once a year or so. They thought it was a good idea for

[3] In Tibetan, it is common to use kinship terms to refer to non-relatives as a sign of solidarity and/or respect.

him to go to North America, for he would, as many Tibetans living there do, send remittances back to help support his parents and siblings. I asked him how many brothers and sisters he had. He replied that he had sixteen. Seeing the surprise on my face, he awkwardly explained that he had four mothers and one father. Attempting to relieve his obvious discomfort at talking about his five parents, I casually mentioned that I had a friend in town who has five fathers. He relaxed a bit. Sounding slightly critical, he then made a remark about his father seeing himself as a 'big man' and thus needing more wives.

A couple of years later, I tried to catch up with Dikyi, Tashi, and Tsomo. However, they had all moved on to different locations and employment. Dikyi had married a Frenchman and was living in Nice, while Tashi had achieved his dream of emigrating. He was living in Philadelphia and had a good job. For Born Refugees, who are more likely to have a college education, migration to France or the United States is not such a risky endeavor. Their education qualifies them for work to which other Tibetan exiles do not have access. This does not mean that all Born Refugees who emigrate work white collar jobs or live middle class lives. However, they are more likely to find higher paying work than Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals who likely did not have the opportunity to go to university.

Unlike Dikyi and Tashi, Tsomo had not caught the Go West Virus. When I stopped by her parents' store during one follow up visit, I found her father seated behind the shop counter. He said that Tsomo had gotten a job with one of the TCVs as a housemother. She was enjoying it and loved being able to serve the Tibetan community. As Born Refugees, Tashi and Tsomo had opportunities that other youth in exile do not. Yet each followed differing paths: Tsomo placed preservation and service to the community at the fore, while Tashi attempted to balance a modern, fashionable, and progressive identity with traditional family obligations, even when that family structure conflicted with his ideas.

Semi-Orphans

Semi-Orphans are children and youth who have come into exile as relatively young children (usually six or seven years old, though they may be as old as thirteen), often leaving behind family in Tibet. While their numbers are relatively modest, they are not insignificant. According to the Reception Center in McLeod Ganj, just under 300 Semi-Orphans arrived in 2007 alone, a year that I was told was typical for migration from Tibet.

Most Semi-Orphans are sent to India by their parents in hopes that they will find a better life outside Chinese Tibet. However, not all Semi-Orphans were sent to India by their parents. Some of the youth with whom I worked were actual orphans, having lost both parents, while others had escaped abusive homes in Tibet coming as young children and adolescents into exile in India. Despite these differences in how they came to be semi-orphaned, most had had no further contact with parents or siblings in Tibet.[4] Those who remembered home often had only vague memories. In addition to the absence of parents, all of the Semi-Orphans I met had grown up at one of the many exile government boarding schools, like the TCVs discussed in chapter 1.

In many ways, Semi-Orphans are similar to Born Refugees. Members of these two communities often attend primary and secondary school together, speak the same languages of Tibetan, English, and Hindi, are familiar with Indian society, bureaucracy, and practices, as well as understand the importance of service to their Tibetan exile community and the perceived dangers of roaming or kyamkyam. Yet in a society in which family has long been central, Semi-Orphans' migration trajectories situate them differently—both positively and negatively—from Born Refugees. Having no parents in exile, these youth most often live with either more established Semi-Orphans or share a room with former schoolmates. Such a home life places fewer restrictions on when and where they can go than is allowed by most parents of Born Refugees. However, unlike Born Refugees, since they have no parents to support them, Semi-Orphans have to quickly find employment after leaving the boarding school that has been home since their arrival in India.

When Semi-Orphans successfully navigate their way into the work world, they often garner respect from other youth. In interviews, many youth said that being without family in exile taught one to "stand on their own feet." Being able to take care of themselves, many suggested, would make them more capable and self-sufficient throughout their lives. Yet, these interviewees also recognized that there are disadvantages to growing up as a Semi-Orphan. In particular, many stated that parents could provide financial and emotional support that would make the transition into adulthood smoother. Thus, the migration trajectories of Semi-Orphans,

4 In recent years communication between India and Tibet has improved dramatically due to the spread of cell phone access in Tibet.

especially in terms of family, friends, service and kyamkyam, position them in ways that are quite different from Born Refugees.

In the following vignettes, we see that both Dechen and Chödön relied on friends and other Semi-Orphans as they made their way outside the school. Yet, in their interactions with Indians, New Arrivals, and Born Refugees they differ significantly. Dechen's friends tend to be other Semi-Orphans. And although she worked outside the Tibetan community for a short time, she now sees serving the Tibetan community as an important part of her future. For Chödön, who has been trying to emigrate to the United States for some time, service does not figure prominently in her everyday life. Moreover, she builds friendships not only with Indians but also with Tibetans who challenge the status quo in the Tibetan Diaspora.

Vignette 2-3: Who to Marry?

When I first met Dechen she had just moved to McLeod Ganj looking for work as a teacher. She had taught English in a Nepalese high school in Pokhara, Nepal for several years, but wanted to serve the Tibetan community by teaching in the exile schools. During my fieldwork, she was a volunteer English teacher, teaching for just one hour a day at a local vocational school and staying for free with another Semi-Orphan, who had a position with the CTA and rented a small apartment. Unlike many Semi-Orphans, Dechen's parents were deceased, having been killed in a train accident when she was quite little. Dechen's older sister lived several hours away with her husband and children, struggling to make ends meet. Dechen spoke to her now and again on the phone, but didn't like to bother her with any money or other problems. She relied on her friends from school for assistance.

One day we were sitting in her friend's room reading magazines and talking. Dechen asked me if I was married. We talked a bit about what it was like to be married and how I knew I wanted to marry my husband. I asked her if she wanted to get married. She hesitated and said, yes, but she couldn't imagine knowing a guy that well. She hadn't really dated anyone, even when she lived in Nepal as a teacher. We talked about what she liked in a potential husband. I then asked her if she would consider marrying someone newly arrived from Tibet, to which she answered "No! My sister would kill me!" I then asked about marrying an Indian man, and she replied, "That would be worse!" She went on to say that Tibetans from Tibet and Indians are just so different from Tibetans who grew up in India. She didn't believe that she would have very much in common with

someone with either of those backgrounds. With that, she said, too, that maybe she wouldn't get married. She just couldn't imagine it.

Vignette 2-4: Veg and Non-Veg

Chödön recently opened a clothing store in the McLeod Ganj Market. To buy her initial inventory, she scraped together her own money with funds borrowed from friends Tibetan and foreign as well as a small amount from a distant uncle. She had rented out a rather dark, tiny space far from the entrance to a building that was something akin to a small shopping mall. Like the other stores in this mall, her store catered to young Indian tourists and local Tibetan youth.

Chödön was easily the youngest storekeeper in the building and as such she was wary of other storekeepers taking advantage of her. One day while sitting in Chödön's store, she told me that the other Tibetan shopkeepers near her store wouldn't talk to her because her customers walked past their stores and only bought from her. The other storekeepers thought that Chödön should refer business to them. She countered saying that they never send her any customers, so why should she help them out? I nodded in assent.

We sat quietly for a while as she paged through saved Hindi and English text messages on her cell phone. Soon a young Tibetan man entered the tiny store. Chödön greeted him excitedly in Tibetan and found a small stool for him. The young man asked her what she is looking at on her mobile and she showed him. They laughed and he pulled out his cell phone, too. Over the next half hour, Chödön and her friend, Shakya, paged through at least thirty text messages that they had saved on their phones, reading them aloud. These messages were short poems, song excerpts, two line adages and jokes. They were mainly in English, some with Hindi punch lines and a few others wholly in Hindi. Notably, none were in Tibetan.[5] The text messages tended to deal with one of two specific topics: relationships (i.e. love or friendship) or sex. At one point, Chödön turned to me and said that in India young people often call these two categories of

[5] It seems that at the time of this episode there were few if any text messages in the Tibetan script due to a lack of a uniform system for Romanization of Tibetan. However, during a later visit in 2008, I was shown several text messages in the Tibetan script, which may be attributed to an advancement in technology.

messages 'Veg' and 'Non-Veg,'[6] and that these terms have become popular among Tibetan youth. She turned back to Shakya; they continued to page through more text messages.

Their raucous laughter and time to time slight embarrassment at some of the more graphic non-veg messages was interrupted by the entrance of two Indian men in their 20s, who were interested in pair of dress shoes in the store window. Chödön's cell phone quickly dropped into her jean pocket and Shakya stepped outside to make room for the customers. Chödön pulled the shoes out of the front display window telling her customers the price in Hindi. They haggled for a bit but, in the end, the men didn't buy the shoes. As Chödön put away the shoes she showed the two Indian men, Shakya poked his head back into the store and told her in Tibetan that he had to go. She said, "Ok, see you later" and finished replacing the shoes in the display window.

Dechen and Chödön are industrious and successful young people able to "stand on their own feet" in McLeod. Soon after I met Dechen she was hired to teach at the Upper TCV in McLeod Ganj, a very prestigious position. No doubt her friends in the government were able to make sure her talents were recognized and rewarded. But these young women travel in different social circles in town. Dechen's friends are mainly other Semi-Orphans, many of whom are rather well-connected, having government jobs. On the other hand, Chödön is friends with Semi-Orphans but also a few Born Refugees and New Arrivals. She is also close to some Americans who live in McLeod part-time. Her friends, unlike Dechen's, are not always the most reputable in town. In terms of service, Dechen left a good job in Nepal specifically because she wanted to serve the Tibetan community. Chödön, though, would have preferred to have opened her store in an Indian community but her financial backers didn't want to see their money leave town. Each young woman sees herself as Tibetan but differs on what this means in terms of their everyday practices.

New Arrivals

The name 'New Arrival' is a translation from the Tibetan *sarchor* or *sarchorpa*. Both the English and Tibetan terms are used commonly in referring to especially youth who are newly arrived from Tibet. Being called a

[6] 'Veg' and 'non-veg' are abbreviations of vegetarian and non-vegetarian. These terms are euphemisms for non-sexual and sexual content, respectively.

New Arrival has much less to do with the time spent in exile as it does with an individual's migration trajectory. New Arrivals tend to have come to India in the second wave of Tibetan exiles that began in the 1980s, are in their teens or twenties when they arrive, and soon after arrival attend the Suja or Tibetan Transit Schools.

Since the opening of the border with Chinese Tibet in the 1980s, a not insignificant number of Tibetans have left Tibet for India. In 2007, 791 New Arrivals between the ages of fourteen and thirty came to McLeod Ganj, 70% or just over 500 came without parents or family.[7] Like Semi-Orphans, these New Arrivals typically have no regular contact with the parents and siblings they left behind in Tibet. However, because New Arrivals have spent their childhood and adolescence with their family, many maintain sporadic contact through letters and phone calls. At the very least, these youth have clear memories of the lives and people who remained on the Tibetan plateau. Unlike Semi-Orphans and Born Refugees, most New Arrivals speak Chinese with some fluency. Most also speak one or more dialect of Tibetan. Many New Arrivals use their time in McLeod Ganj to study English at one of the many free English schools in town. But their use and knowledge of Hindi varies across individuals, though I have never met a New Arrival who was studying Hindi. Instead they tend to spend time learning English.

Despite New Arrivals having recently arrived from the exile community's geographic homeland, they are not seen as 'authentic' embodiments of Tibetan culture. In fact, other exiles view them as Sinicized, having lived in Chinese Tibet for many years. They are often suspected of spying for the Chinese government as well as being considered untrustworthy, backward, and uneducated.[8] Such perceptions of New Arrivals stem not only from their having lived among Han Chinese, but also from regionalisms that characterize people from Amdo—who comprise a large portion of newer exiles—as rubes. Many come from rural areas in Tibet and have difficulty fitting in in cosmopolitan McLeod Ganj. Moreover, friendships and marriages between New Arrivals and other exiles are few in McLeod Ganj. Some New Arrivals do have friends who are more long-term exiles but for the most part they do not.

Dolkar and Palden below are among the large number of New Arrivals with only New Arrival friends. Both are multilingual in Tibetan, Chinese,

[7] According to the Reception Center in McLeod Ganj.
[8] Diehl (2002); Yeh (2007); Prost (2008) among others.

and English. Both also speak a bit of Hindi. However, while Dolkar works diligently to learn English so she can treat both Tibetans and foreigners when she becomes a Tibetan medicine doctor, Palden refuses to speak or write in English except in a few cases as we will see. On the face of it, Palden's refusal to speak English might not seem unusual for someone who lives in a largely Tibetan-dominated community. However, among Tibetans in exile—and even more so among Palden's peers—speaking Tibetan with a sprinkling of English phrases has become the norm.

This linguistic practice has become so common among Tibetan youth that, in my experience, parents and elders complain about it and youth often critique others when they perceive them to use 'too much' English in their Tibetan. Thus, in the vignette below, Palden's use of English is remarkable because this is one of only two instances when I heard English from him and because it was used with his employer, a long time exile Tibetan. This vignette highlights that despite Palden's rejection of English, there are times that he attempts to conform to local language norms—a process called drag that I outline in the next chapter—and acquire a bit of linguistic capital in the eyes of his employer.

Vignette 2-5: Working English

Palden arrived in India about eight years prior to my meeting him. Having been well-educated in Tibet, he had come into the exile communities hoping to help out in the government or the schools. His attempts to find work in these areas, though, had been unsuccessful. When I met him, he was married to another New Arrival. He had a two year old daughter, Ngodüp, and his wife was pregnant with their second. Palden was his daughter's main caregiver, as his wife worked as a seamstress making Tibetan chubas in a neighboring village. Throughout the days I spent with Palden at work, Ngodüp happily wandered around the restaurant under the watchful eye of Palden and his friends.

Palden held a job as the general manager of a local restaurant and hotel called Karakoram. It was close to the Market along a busy street in McLeod Ganj. Unlike many other restaurants and hotels in McLeod, Karakoram catered mainly to Tibetans. In the evenings, though, the dining area on the rooftop was something of a hangout for foreign tourists. Some more budget-minded foreign backpackers rented rooms in the hotel, but mainly there were Tibetans from other parts of South Asia staying here. The restaurant, where Palden spent most of his day, is usually quite empty except for him and his friends, all of whom were New Arrivals.

One morning, after a few sips of tea, one friend, named Sonam, brings up politics, in particular George W. Bush, Osama Bin Laden and Mao Tsetung. In Tibetan, he denounces the September 11th attacks and then launches into a ten-minute speech of how George W. Bush's immigration policies have made immigrating to the United States easier and that Mao was a "mi yakbo" or 'good guy.' Palden and I both disagree with much of what he is saying. I tell him in Tibetan that just traveling to the United States has become much more difficult lately and immigration even more so. I also suggest that some of Mao's policies might not have been the most beneficial for his country. Palden jumps in after me trying to dissuade Sonam, but he will not budge. We continue on debating good naturedly for about a half an hour until Palden says he has some paperwork he needs to get done. Sonam says that he has to go anyway and gets up and leaves the restaurant after making sure that I wasn't offended by his remarks.

Palden walks behind the counter and pulls out the large guesthouse registration book and flips through the pages to the current month. He is looking at the book as Lhakpa, the owner of the guesthouse and restaurant, comes in to talk to Palden. Lhakpa is in her mid-forties. She has long hair and is wearing a Tibetan chuba. Lhakpa says in Tibetan that she wanted to remind Palden that starting the next month, she is going to close the restaurant/guesthouse "for five months" (using the English phrase) in order to do some renovations. She asks him how many people are staying in the guesthouse right now. He says that there is a foreign couple in one room and three monks in another. He says that two Israeli tourists looked at a room, but they were unsure if they wanted it. She asks him if he thinks they will come back. To my surprise, Palden says in English, "I don't know." Up until now I had never heard Palden speak any English. Lhakpa goes on to remind Palden that the guesthouse's quarterly occupancy report is due at the Himachal Tourism office before the end of the day. With that, she walks out of the restaurant and Palden begins filling out the English language occupancy report.

Among New Arrivals, Dolkar is much more typical than Palden. Many New Arrivals attend not one but many English classes each day, hoping to become fluent speakers. It is also common for New Arrivals to relax watching Chinese language television programs, since they often know too little Hindi to watch Indian shows. Some cafes in McLeod cater specifically to New Arrivals by televising Chinese and Tibetan language programs from China for their patrons to watch as they eat or sip a cup of

Tibetan tea. Palden, though, is a bit more unusual. When I met up with him again in 2008, the restaurant had closed and he had been unemployed for several years. His wife's tailoring business, though, had burgeoned. She supported the family, while he looked after their two children. Palden still seemed frustrated with his inability to find work he wanted to do. But he remained steadfast in his refusal to speak English. For Palden, Tibetans speak too much English. Intertwining language and identity, Palden saw the use of English as a selling out of one's Tibetan identity. To him, Tibetans should speak Tibetan, even in India. Given the ubiquity of English used in McLeod Ganj's tourist sector, the CTA, and with Indians and Indian government offices, I fear that Palden's refusal to speak English may be a contributing factor to his continued unemployment.

Vignette 2-6: Studying English, Speaking Amdo, Viewing Chinese

Because it is the first time I am meeting with Yangchen Dolkar, my assistant, Wangmo, goes with me to meet her at the bus stand so she can explain the project one more time. She also takes this opportunity to go over an extensive list of examples of writings we have compiled over the course of the project, encouraging inclusion of other writings, and emphasizing that writing in any language is fine. This morning, though, Wangmo is having difficulty going over this list of examples. Dolkar, who is a New Arrival, does not speak Lhasa Tibetan and Wangmo does not know any of the Amdo variety that Dolkar speaks. While these two varieties are not mutually unintelligible, they are different enough to slow communication between two native speakers. To make things even more complicated, Dolkar doesn't read the *küyik*[9] script in which the instructions are written. In their respective varieties of Tibetan, Wangmo and Dolkar slowly make their way through the list, using several English words, like 'love letters,' where they reach an impasse. After each line, Dolkar rewrites the Tibetan in *üchen* inside a notebook she has with her.

After they finish, Dolkar and I leave Wangmo and walk over to the apartment she shares with her husband, making small talk in English because my Amdo proficiency is limited. We remain there only long enough to collect her English textbooks. We walk down the hill to the Multi-

[9] *Küyik* and *üchen* are two styles of Tibetan handwriting. *Küyik* or 'running letters' is similar to cursive writing in English. *Üchen* is a squared style similar to printing. *Üchen* is used to make woodblocks for printing religious texts and is the standard Tibetan language computer font.

Educational Center, one of the many free English schools in McLeod Ganj. Unlike many other English schools, this school has several well-appointed classrooms each with a blackboard, a bulletin board, and posters with pictures and English vocabulary. There are about thirty students in a class that is made up of monks, nuns, and lay people. All but a few monks appear to be under the age of thirty-five.

After class we return to her apartment and start preparing lunch for just the two of us, since her husband most often eats at his office. While making lunch, she turns the television to a new cable television channel that shows Chinese and a few Tibetan language programs. A Chinese drama comes on. In English, Dolkar fills me in on the plot's progress now and then. We watch Chinese TV for most of the afternoon, except for an hour and a half when Dolkar studies English and her Tibetan medicine books. She tells me that she is going to open her own Tibetan medicine clinic. She was a Tibetan medicine nurse in Tibet, so she only needs to study a little longer before she can open her own office. I ask her if studying Lhasa Tibetan might be more useful for her as her patients will most likely be Tibetan, but she replies that she thinks English will be much more useful.

Crossing Communities

While I have painted a picture here of these youth belonging to individual communities, it would be remarkable to find that all youth belong to only one youth community. I have come to know several Tibetan youth, who participate in more than one youth community. The one I discuss here, Dondüp Nyima, is a somewhat marginal member of both the New Arrival and Born Refugee communities. As I stated above, he is able to participate in these two communities because he is the nephew of and resides with a well-established McLeod Ganj family. They act as his surrogate parents, providing him with educational opportunities in addition to his daily needs. Yet, as we will learn below, in some aspects he is still seen as a New Arrival.

Vignette 2-7: Once a New Arrival…

The first morning I met Dondüp Nyima, I saw his ruddy complexion and slightly gaunt face and assumed that he was a New Arrival. I began speaking with him in Tibetan, asking where his parents live and with whom he stayed in town. His answers, however, came back in fluent English. He had just finished up a two-year technical training program and was living

in town with his aunt, uncle and their family. Over the ensuing several months, I learned that Nyima was the nephew of a prominent family in town. They were still accorded respect because of their upper class status in Tibet and their continued work for the exile community. Because of the position of his uncle's family, Nyima was able to get a better education than most New Arrivals including attending the technical training program. He dressed similar to Born Refugees, in heavy soled shoes, jeans, and a t-shirt most often, and he spoke Tibetan, English, and Hindi in addition to Chinese. Yet, because he came from Tibet when he was in his teens and maintained friendships with New Arrivals, he was still seen as a New Arrival by some in town.

I got to know Nyima because he was dating one of my students, a young woman I was teaching French. She was a Born Refugee from a well-established McLeod Ganj family. When they first met, both thought that her family would be happy with such a match since Nyima came from an upper class family in Tibet and lived with his locally prominent aunt and uncle. However, when the young woman's family learned about their interest in each other, they told their daughter she could no longer see Nyima.

As the young woman's teacher, she came to me for advice. She was confused why her parents had such problems with Nyima. She told me that her parents were unhappy because he was a New Arrival, but she didn't see why this mattered since he came from a good family. His uncle had even tried to intercede with her parents on Nyima's behalf. However, this only prompted an ultimatum in which the parents demanded that the young woman choose between Nyima and her family. After this ultimatum she and Nyima continued to see each other clandestinely, meeting where they could to talk and try to sort things out. In a small town, though, few activities remain secret. Soon her parents had found out they were still seeing each other and set her young brother to accompany her everywhere she went.

At this point, a mutual friend approached me to help them out. She said that the parents of the young woman would allow her to come to my house unescorted. So would I mind letting her and Nyima meet at my place to figure out what to do? Nyima wanted to elope but she was afraid to anger her parents further. They needed a bit of private time to sort things out. The next day, I telephoned the young woman, and she came to my apartment. About ten minutes later, Nyima showed up at my door looking anxious and nervous. The friend and I waited outside talking about anything else all the while stealing worried glances toward my front

door. About an hour later, Nyima left. We went into the apartment and found the young woman sitting on my sofa looking out the window. She told us that she had decided to break off the relationship. She couldn't get married without her parents' consent. Soon afterward, Nyima took a job in a town some distance away.

Nyima's membership in both of the Born Refugee and New Arrival communities lead him into difficulty. For his girlfriend's parents, his having resided in Chinese Tibet made him unsuitable for their daughter to marry no matter the status of his family. For my student, though, Nyima's familial background and post-secondary education overrode his New Arrival membership. Not all youth who are members of multiple communities have such problems. In fact, Chödön from vignette 2-4, moved easily between the Semi-Orphan and Born Refugee communities. But the differences between these communities are perceived as much less marked than those between the Born Refugee and the New Arrival communities.

In examining extracts from the everyday lives of these youth, I hoped to present something of a balanced picture of my participants' lives. As this research project emerged and took shape, I selected individuals from each community with which to spend more time and attention. While I worked hard to account for gender, economic and social classes, employment and other factors among the youth with whom I worked, I am sure that in some ways the view I present here is partial. With one exception, relationships with female participants were much less fraught with potential problems for my participants—many young men did not want people to think I was their foreign girlfriend/sponsor—and generally the young women I worked with were able to be more open with me. The one exception to this was one young man named Lobsang, who became something of a younger brother to me. We became good friends, a friendship which continues today.

Methods

In the research I conducted during the nineteen months I lived in McLeod Ganj I relied upon multiple methodologies to help me understand the lives and literacies of Tibetan youth in McLeod. My methods ranged from qualitative participant observation with eighteen youth to much more quantitative measures examining a how youth define service to the Tibetan community. Drawing from such diverse methodologies, I was able

to gain a better view of the social aspects of everyday writing among youth because different methods brought out distinct aspects of their experiences. I classify the methods I used into three categories: (1) Participant Observation, (2) Interviews, and (3) Text Collection.

Participant Observation

Participant observation has long been a mainstay of anthropological fieldwork. It is integral to understanding everyday life. When used correctly participant observation gives the researcher a tool for better understanding the lived experiences of the people with whom we work. The anthropologist *bodily* participates and shares in the experiences of his/her participants. These experiences of the body expose the researcher to everyday life in a physically immediate way. While these experiences are not the same as those of the participant, they bring us closer to understanding how those with whom we work experience their world.

While I lived in McLeod Ganj, I conducted undirected and directed participant observation. Undirected participant observation includes experiences of the lives of multiple people or even the entire community. This type of participant observation included the two months during which I lived with a local Tibetan family, participating in their everyday lives as a quasi-family member, adhering to the rules of the family and contributing to the daily chores and activities. It also continues throughout my frequent visits in McLeod. I continually participate in community life, living in the town and attending local events. I often attend variety shows put on by Tibetan students' groups from nearby universities, Tibetan rock shows, the annual opera festival, as well as walking around the market loop with Tibetan youth and gathering with my neighbors along the road to catch a glimpse of the Dalai Lama as he drives by. Through participant observation not only am I still able learn which events were important to whom in McLeod Ganj, but I am also able to use these events to meet people and become known about town.

I also employed directed participant observation during my fieldwork. In directed participation, I was mainly concerned with a single individual and their interactions with others. For this portion of my research, I selected eighteen participants between the ages of twenty and thirty-two with each of whom I conducted participant observation over three days. The total number of hours spent with individual participants ranged from twelve to twenty-five. The participants were selected from the survey interviewees discussed below. Being interested in youth, the main criterion for

inclusion was that they consider themselves a youth and participate in youth activities. Within this group of youth, I aimed for an even a distribution across the three youth communities. I also worked to have a balanced distribution in terms of gender and socioeconomic background.

Interviews

Over the course of my fieldwork, I conducted three different rounds of interviews. In 2002, I conducted structured and unstructured interviews. In 2008, during a follow up visit, I used semi-structured interviews. All of these interview types allowed me to gather more systematic information about language and social life in the McLeod Ganj community.

Structured Interviews

In 2002, I used a structured interview format to collect information regarding written and spoken language usage as well as data on participants' educational background. As this book focuses on literacy practices, I limited the sample to only those individuals who self-reported as literate[10] in any language. The aim of these interviews was to collect data across a representative sample of McLeod Ganj residents as a means of forming a linguistic portrait of the community.

Two female Tibetan research assistants and I interviewed 184 literate Tibetans relying upon the Central Tibetan Administration's 1998 census for local gender and age distributions to obtain something nearing a representative group. Using quota sampling, we divided McLeod Ganj into community-recognized neighborhoods, subdividing larger neighborhoods. We then estimated the number of residents per neighborhood and determined what proportion of McLeod Ganj's population of 7,000 resided in each neighborhood. With these proportions and neighborhoods, we went door to door conducting interviews until we had the appropriate number or quota of people for each gender and age category from each neighborhood or sub-neighborhood.

Not only did this method allow us to obtain a representative sample of the community, it also gave me a way to begin to get to know my neighbors and other community members. Throughout my dissertation

[10] The boundary between literacy and illiteracy is a problematic one. Thus, by relying upon participants' self-reports of their literacy level, I attempted to rely upon emic notions of literacy.

research, there were several people I met through these interviews who often said hello to me in the street or stopped me to see how my research was coming along. Thus, these interviews allowed me to gain some visibility in town and begin to differentiate myself from the many foreign tourists that come through McLeod Ganj annually.

Unstructured Interviews

At the conclusion of my three days of participant observation with each of the eighteen youth I discussed in the section on participant observation, I conducted an unstructured interview. During this interview, the participant and I discussed each of the at least twenty pieces of writing they had given me on their last day of participant observation. I asked them questions and gave them time to tell me anything about each writing that they thought was important to my understanding it. I also took this opportunity to ask questions about any aspects of the participant observation that still required some clarification. Lastly, I gave each participant time to ask any questions they might have about my research project.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In 2008, I returned to McLeod Ganj to conduct some additional fieldwork on themes that had emerged in the analysis of my data from my previous visits. In this course of this stay, an American research assistant and I conducted semi-structured interviews with forty-six Tibetan youth, asking them open-ended questions about their social networks, the notion of shapshu 'service,' and about kyamkyam. We also asked interviewees to complete an exercise in which they sorted cards with commonly held jobs into those that serve the Tibetan community and those that do not. This exercise helped me to refine and better understand how youth define service both within and across these three communities.

Participants for these interviews were recruited through a combination of methods. First, we used a street-intercept technique, sampling from different streets at varied times. Using these interviews as seeds, we then shifted to participant-driven recruiting by giving each interviewee two coupons to give to two friends. These friends could then return at a specified time and place to take the interview themselves and receive two coupons. We also recruited using snowball sampling that started with a referral from a friend or acquaintance in the community.

Through these interviews we not only gathered data from Semi-Orphans, New Arrivals and Born Refugees but through these techniques we learned that there is little if any overlap between New Arrivals' social

networks and the other two communities as referrals from either of these groups never spanned communities.

Text Collection

In order to acquire the written language that makes up the primary data for this project, I asked each participant at the outset of their participation to provide me with at least twenty pieces of writing. What constituted a 'piece' of writing I left to the individual participant. I received a wide array of writings: class notes, store inventories, personal diaries, poetry, song lyrics, lists, and even notes dashed off to a friend. It is possible that participants have chosen self-consciously in their submissions. They may have wanted to present themselves in a way that not only matches how they view themselves but also what seems to them to be writing worthy of inclusion in 'a book.' Unlike studies of spoken language, in which over longer durations participants usually become less attentive to their language use, the durability of written language allows it to be carefully chosen and possibly even rewritten.[11]

Even though writing's durability allows the author to make changes and alterations to their texts, no individual or group is immediately aware of all the social connotations and meanings in their writings. For example, they may not be aware of connotations of gender or class that are part of a word, phrase, or sentence.[12] Thus, not all of the available meanings that are part of any piece of writing are necessarily apparent to author or audience. Any given individual would only be aware of the information

[11] This filtering is similar to what William Hanks (1987) terms 'reported speech.' He suggests that such reporting of even one's own speech/writing is a metalinguistic framing of the text that "situate[s] the work or some portion of it as discourse of a certain kind, with certain intelligible meanings" (Hanks 1987, 679). Thus, the choice of certain writings over others is in itself an effort to convey metalinguistic information about one's self and one's place within the community. This metalinguistic information is communicated not through the meanings of the words written but through social ideas about certain genres or topics in a text. For example, the 'intelligible meanings' related by the inclusion of a text message in a New Arrival's collection of writings could be one of affluence (being able to afford a mobile phone) and/or modernity (being part of a community in which text messaging is common). These metalinguistic framings are influenced by one's social world. Thus, even as a form of reported speech, these writings can make claims about the roles and lived experiences of their authors.

[12] I often give the example of the words *piss* and *pee* to American students. While they know the meanings and connotations of these words, they rarely offer the gendered connotations that go along with their usage. In a very general sense, *piss* connotes masculinity and *pee* femininity. A similar sort of limit on awareness (Silverstein 1981) is inherent in all forms of language written or spoken.

that pertains to certain aspects of writing that are prominent in local ideas about language (e.g. standard spelling, appropriateness of a topic, grammaticality). Consequently, there are limits placed on any author's awareness of the social meanings of their writings. It is most likely that in some ways the writings given to me were manipulated, but their authors could not be aware of and/or have manipulated all meanings associated with a piece of writing. But even among those aspects that were altered, such changes and alterations would reflect, reinforce and/or challenge what a given community sees as appropriate for incorporation into 'a book.' Thus, these writings, whether overtly modified or not, are influenced by and impact the everyday lives in which they were created.

In this study of everyday literacies among communities of Tibetan exile youth, I see literacy, and language more generally, as inextricably intertwined with everyday social practices. Through everyday literacies these youth negotiate differences and similarities at both the individual and community levels. These communities of Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals, though, are not static entities to which belonging is 'assigned.' Instead they are continually defined, supported, and challenged in both mundane and remarkable events and activities. As socially embedded literacies, these practices are also impacted by the larger events of the 1990s and 2000s. More importantly, though, is the influence that these youths' migration trajectories have on negotiating how they write their experiences of exile.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES OF AND IN PRACTICE

Among this book's chapters, this one stands apart in its content and structure. In some ways, it is a metalinguistic discussion of the book's content, pulling out and commenting on important ideas that run through this ethnography. As a 'discussion of itself' this chapter has several aims. First, I hope to provide a clear and relatively concise view of the main ideas of this work. Second, for more novice anthropologists, I attempt to make accessible some difficult concepts, while also laying out a novel synthesis of theories that may be of interest to more advanced students and scholars of anthropology.

In total, this chapter discusses seven ideas that are central to my study. The first two, *literacy* and *youth*, outline how these notions are understood both in anthropology as well as in McLeod Ganj. The remaining five work through approaches to community (Lave and Wenger 1991) and social change (Sahlins 1981) to synthesize two theories that I see as complementary. The chapter culminates with examples of how this synthesis works out on the ground in McLeod through three processes that recur throughout this book: slippage, drag, and change.

Literacy

Not infrequently, I would be asked during my stay in McLeod Ganj what I had come there to research. When I would reply that I wanted to research writing, I was almost invariably referred to this or that monk, teacher, or other older learned community member. I would reply—and with varying levels of patience—to these suggestions that I was interested in what *they* were writing in their everyday lives. I would list examples of writing I had seen among Tibetans in town: grocery lists, text messages, love letters, store inventories. However, more often than not, I would get a concerned look conveying the worry that (1) this type of literacy wasn't a proper object of study, and (2) perhaps I didn't know what I was doing. I would do my best to convince them of the usefulness of my research, but I fear I didn't always succeed.

Despite literacy having been widespread in McLeod Ganj for several decades, there remains a conception of the 'right' or 'correct' kind of literacy. Such ideas demonstrate that among Tibetans in exile literacy is not a single or unitary way of reading and writing. Instead every person is adept at several modes and manners of reading and writing, each with differing functions, domains (e.g. home, school, work), scripts, and possibly even languages. David Barton (2007, 38) suggests that "where these different practices cluster into coherent groups it is very useful to talk in terms of them being different literacies. A literacy is a stable coherent, identifiable configuration of practices such as legal literacy or the literacy of specific workplaces." Throughout my fieldwork, three literacies made themselves clear: religious literacy, school literacy, and everyday literacy. Of course, there are many other literacies in McLeod Ganj, but in my experience these comprise the three most common.

From the beginnings of work on the social aspects of literacy in the early 1980s, there has been an implicit and, at times, explicit understanding that more than one literacy exists in any community. However, one literacy, namely school literacy, has long received the most attention. This is understandable since in many societies educational institutions are the primary means for creating literate citizens. As literacy studies have proliferated over the last decades, literacy outside the school has received increasing attention (Baynham 2004). With this attention has come a proliferation of labels to refer to such non-school literacies. These terms range from locally meaningful terms, such as tin-trunk texts (Barber 2006), to more comprehensive labels like vernacular literacy (Street 1993; LaPage 1997), grassroots literacy (Blommaert 2008); out-of-school literacy (Prinsloo 2004; Hull and Shultz 2001), and home literacy (Barton 2007) to name only a few. These and other studies have attempted to take seriously the proposal by John Szwed (1981) that the "social meanings of literacy" be closely examined by embedding reading and writing in the contexts of their production and circulation.

This book shares with ethnographic studies of literacy a concern with reading but especially writing beyond the school and classroom. Yet, there are also two cautions to be made. First, we need to take care that in the recognition of various literacies, we do not codify them and thus create an impression of discrete categories. Adapting a phrase from Edward Sapir: all literacies leak. Even the important division between school and non-school literacies is not impermeable. Features of one literacy often bleed into another; literacies overlap and diverge in ever-shifting ways. Instead,

these labels are more of a heuristic allowing us as researchers to grapple with and better understand the relationships between literacies both in practice and in the conceptions of our participants. A second caution, as pointed out by David Barton (2007, 38), "literacies are not equally valued." Among many Tibetan exiles, religious literacy is more valuable than everyday or even school literacy. Such positioning of religious literacy ties Tibetan exiles as a people to their history as an independent nation and theocracy. For a community deeply committed to freeing Tibet from Chinese rule, religious literacy highlights a uniquely Tibetan aspect of their past and present: Tibetan Buddhism. From this brief example, we can discern that if we are to fully appreciate the social meanings of literacy, it is critical, then, to look to the social context of these literacies to understand how they are embedded in relations of inequality, parity, division, and unity.

In McLeod Ganj, literacy is locally intertwined with education and the educated. This is why at the start of my research I was so often referred to monks, teachers, and other educated individuals as important sources of information. For, as I discuss in chapter 5, literacy is still a rather new skill among Tibetans, having become widespread only after the beginnings of the Tibetan Diaspora in the late 1950s. Among Tibetan exiles, as with many other examples of incipient literacies,[1] literacy quickly spread outside its initial social contexts, like schooling. Yet local ideologies concerning literacy are influenced by the exile community's education system, in effect, blurring the boundary between school and out-of-school literacies. Thus, throughout this book, I examine an array of uses of writing in both the everyday and in educational institutions. I embed these writings in the present and historical contexts of youth, migration, diaspora, and social change to examine how literacy can be used to renew and re-envision divisions and alliances.

Youth Studies and Tibetan Youth

In the first chapter of this book, I talked about my arrival in McLeod Ganj and the repeated advice about how kyamkyam ('roaming') could damage my reputation as a single female and apparent youth in the community. In McLeod Ganj, such talk about youth and kyamkyam is widespread. But

[1] See especially Besnier (1995).

talk about youth is not limited only to kyamkyam. It is common to hear elders discuss a whole suite of youth attributes and practices from clothing to hairstyles to leisure activities in a way that constructs a single youth personality or character, devoid of diversity. Moreover, youth themselves also talk in such terms about this broadly conceived social category. For example, one female youth, named Cheme Norzin, wrote an essay in her personal journal that she entitled “Aspiration of Today’s Tibetan Youth in Exile.” About mid-way in this three-page essay she wrote,

> Many of us have the wrong attitude towards the today’s Tibetan youth in exile because of their outlook such as the way of life style they live, modern way of living and fashionable life style. [English]

Despite Cheme’s use of third person pronouns in this essay, she does consider herself a youth. She—like many of my other participants—paints through her writing a picture of youth in rather homogenous terms. While youth discourses do at times differ across elders and youth, these discourses function similarly by homogenizing youth into a single unitary category.

Despite such homogenizing youth discourses circulating in McLeod Ganj, actual interactions with and between youth are replete with diversity. On the ground interactions in practice blur divisions between youth and their elders in favor of divisions based in shared migration trajectories. This boundary fuzziness is not unique to McLeod Ganj, “researchers in a variety of cultural settings have [also] found that the divisions between youth and elders . . . are blurry and ambiguous rather than clearly differentiated” (Bucholtz 2002, 531). This does not mean that most youth experience exile as their elders do. It does however, highlight that among Tibetan exiles migration trajectories create more salient social divisions than age. Divisions cut across and diversify the homogenous picture of youth that is created through community discourses. This book aims to explore how such divisions are created, maintained and challenged across a diverse youth community.

This recognition of youth as a heterogeneous social category has been the focus of recent work in the anthropology of youth (Chun 2009; Lee 2009; Skelton and Valentine 1998; Cole and Durham 2007; Maira 2002; Mendoza-Denton 2008; among others). Such recognition, though, was not present in early studies of youth (e.g. Mead 1928). Often youth was seen as a transitional lifestage, as a sort of ‘practice’ for adulthood. Moreover, much youth research until only quite recently centered on youth deviance and reader titillation, while ignoring more mundane and even

conservative youth practices (Bucholtz 2002). Little attention was given to the everyday means through which youth create heterogeneity in their youth-based communities. More recently, though, attention has shifted to just these concerns. Increasingly, researchers have realized that "the situation of youth varies widely even within cultural groupings, and individuals as well as groups may confront specific historical and cultural processes in different ways" (Bucholtz and Skapoulli 2009, 3).

In addition to more nuanced approaches to studies of youth, work that examines the role of language in creating youth differences and identities has also emerged. Such work has recognized that "while language can be embraced to draw people together, . . . [it] is increasingly employed to mark and reinforce salient sociopolitical differences" (Roth-Gordon and Woronov 2009, 130). Despite the recent increase in interest in the everyday language practices of youth, little work has been done that examines the importance that literacy practices play among youth. This book attempts to address this gap. Certainly in McLeod Ganj literacy is an important part of youths' everyday lives. In fact, for many, writing is a prominent part of each day, from writing to family and friends in other Tibetan exile settlements across the globe, to publishing poetry in the local newsletter, to keeping personal journals like Cheme's above. These youth use literacy to negotiate their experiences of exile, experiences that are informed by the trajectories of their participation in migration.

It is not, however, enough to merely examine the impact of migration trajectories on the literacy practices of these youth. It is also critical to understand the dynamics of these diverging literacy practices as youth with different trajectories come into contact with each other. Especially in McLeod Ganj, a densely populated town at the center of the local youth culture, Born Refugees, New Arrivals, and Semi-Orphans regularly come into contact. Thus, this ethnography seeks to add another layer, that is, how these differing literacy practices impact and influence each other in a youth community divided by their experiences of migration.

Communities of Practice

Throughout this book, I closely examine the everyday writing practices of three communities of Tibetan exile youth: Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals. Born Refugees are the children of the founding generation of the Tibetan diaspora and as such the majority of this community's members have experienced migration only through the stories of their

parents and older siblings. Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals were all born in Tibet, leaving their home country as small children and as teenagers and young adults, respectively. Semi-Orphans were sent into exile by their parents in Tibet with hopes of a better life for them. They were raised among many other Semi-Orphans at one of the Tibetan exile boarding schools, leaving school at around eighteen with only other members of this youth community to depend upon for assistance and support. New Arrivals are the most marginalized community of Tibetan exile youth. They are viewed by many more established exiles as backward, uneducated, and even potentially as Chinese spies. While some are able to find work and make their way successfully in exile, many in this community have difficulty finding employment leaving them with little money and few prospects.

Up to this point, I have referred to each of these groups of youth as a *community*. But what does it mean to say that these are communities? This term by necessity places boundaries between community members and non-members, placing some inside a community and others outside. What, then, is a *community*? In a descriptive sense, it could be defined as a group of people who live together in a particular locale or having a certain characteristic, for example, India's Tibetan exile community or the American academic community. But it also has an affective dimension in the sense of a feeling of togetherness stemming from similarity, such as 'a sense of community.' These conventional definitions of *community* do not fully address the diversity of groups that have been studies by anthropologists. They don't allow us to fully understand the nature of communities, how communities form, or how they endure or collapse. Moreover, as linguistic anthropologists, these definitions of community do not include the important role language plays in this concept. Two ways of looking at language and community emerged over the course of the twentieth century, namely *speech community* and more recently community of practice.

Leonard Bloomfield first coined the term speech community[2] in his 1933 book *Language* where he suggested that members of a speech community share the "same set of speech signals" (1933, 29). Bloomfield's definition assumed a homogeneity of members of a speech community, an assumption that proved problematic in later years. After this initial definition by Bloomfield, little work was done examining speech communities

[2] Throughout the discussion of the term speech community I draw upon Marcyliena Morgan's 2006 essay "Speech Community."

until the early 1970s when linguistic anthropologists challenged the turn a decade in the 1960s earlier toward a purely Chomskyan linguistics that privileged examination of language as a cognitive system rather than one in use in and among particular societies and peoples. The work of John Gumperz (1972), William Labov (1972) and Dell Hymes (1972) brought attention back to language use. Reviving the notion of the speech community, Gumperz and Labov emphasized the importance of shared norms for language usage as an important criterion for membership in a speech community, while Hymes relied on the slightly different notion of 'communicative competence'—the social and linguistic knowledge a speaker needs to have as a member of a particular group. These rethinkings of the term speech community placed an emphasis on mutuality in terms of shared norms and/or knowledge. This approach to language and community was later critiqued for its focus on only central members, the primary position of language, and its applicability merely as a tool for researchers to define their group of study.[3]

More recently, Marycliena Morgan did much to revitalize the speech community concept. She did maintain the importance of mutuality by emphasizing "shared norms, local knowledge, beliefs, and values" (2006, 13). However, she also addressed critics' claims. She demonstrated that this concept does account for heterogeneity and peripheral membership through an uneven distribution of local knowledge, norms, and the like. She acknowledged the utility of speech community to reseachers, but pointed out that communities themselves engage in similar meta-linguistic discussions to negotiate and police the boundaries of their communities. Most importantly, though, Morgan makes clear that there is room for more than one concept of language and community. As she states, speech community is useful for "contrasting communities of speakers rather than identifying the workings of the speech community" (2006, 13).

Many critiques of speech community addressed in Morgan (2006) emerged as the concept of a community of practice was gaining momentum. Communities of practice came out of psychology in the early 1990s and does what speech community does not, it teases out how a community works. In 1991, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger published *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* in which they outlined how learning occurs in apprenticeships, suggesting the use of the term community of practice to understand the relations among apprentices,

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[3] See Bucholtz (1999) and Eckert (2000).

masters, journeymen as well as other individuals involved in such teaching/learning environments. Lave and Wenger themselves acknowledged the intuitive nature of this concept as it appeared in their volume, suggesting further exploration of the concept as a path for future research.

Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet took up this concept as a means of understanding the nexus of language and gender. From Lave and Wenger's work, they focused on the concept of a community of practice defining it as "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor" (1992, 464). Later, Eckert, in her study of linguistic change among students at Belton High, lays out the workings of a community of practice:

> [P]eople come to develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values—in short, practices—as a function of their joint engagement in activity. Simultaneously, social relations form around the activities and activities form around relationships. (2000, 35)

These practices and social relations become the bases for communities of practice and the identity negotiated in and through regular co-participation in activities. Language use, in the form of speech or writing, can become one of the shared 'ways of doing things.' It can be an 'activity,' as Eckert (2000) refers to above, that draws people into relationships as well as an activity engendered by these shared relations. While language use may not function in this way across all ethnographic contexts, where certain linguistic and social practices have become associated with a particular group, these practices are employed by an individual to negotiate their position as a member of a certain community. By claiming membership in a given community through the engagement in even just one shared practice, this act can evoke all other practices that are salient in the given community's repertoire. For example, in the United States in the 1980s use of the words 'grody' (meaning gross) or 'totally' could invoke all other ideas of dress, class, region, etc. associated with what was known then as a Valley Girl identity. Through such usages, other individuals assume a certain type of relationship with this individual based on identity with or difference from these practices. Through a continuation of that relationship more practices may converge either by an individual gaining membership in another community or by a community adopting the practices of another.

In the following chapters, I draw from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (1992), and many others to apply a community of practice approach to understanding the three youth com-

munities in McLeod Ganj. I suggest that among these youth each group's ways of writing about kyamkyam, shapshu ('service'), family, and friends have become shared among members of each community. How they do (or do not) write about these activities, relationships, and concepts is one means through which they negotiate their membership in one or more youth community of practice in McLeod. Through their writing these youth individually link themselves to their community/communities enacting and negotiating identities as certain types of youth in exile.

In looking at these youth communities, it is important to indicate that it is the ability of this approach to link the individual and the group that gives communities of practice such utility. In addition, the assumption of a multiplicity of community memberships, membership ranging from central to peripheral in any given community, and the variability in the importance of language add further power to this perspective on community. By drawing upon this perspective, accounting for membership in both the Born Refugee and New Arrival communities, as we saw with Dondüp Nyima in vignette 2-7, becomes possible. In addition, we can better understand how an individual may be a central member of the Semi-Orphans community but a peripheral member of a workplace community. Lastly, by granting all shared practices of a group the equal possibility of being a central criterion for membership, we avoid placing language in a falsely primary position, a problem that has been cited in work relying upon the speech community concept.

The great strength of the community of practice perspective is it empirical grounding and its location "as a mediating region between local and global analysis."[4] As Eckert pointed out above, it allows us to link the individual to the group. However, "the notion of the community of practice stops short . . . of sociotheoretical analysis of large-scale inequalities."[5] I suggest that this approach to community has the potential to examine social disparity. In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to bring it together with yet another theory of community that functions on such a global scale. In the next section, I will bring in the work of Marshal Sahlins to offer that a synthesis of these two approaches provides a fruitful perspective for understanding and analyzing social change by linking the individual to the global.

[4] Qtd in McElhinny (1998, 174).
[5] Ibid.

Social Change

One of the more debated theories of social change in anthropology came out of a concise book by Marshall Sahlins entitled *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities.*[6] In this book, Sahlins follows the travels of the explorer and colonialist James Cook to the Hawaiian islands in the late eighteenth century. Charting out interactions Cook and his men had with the local Hawaiians after their 1779 arrival, he uses this historical example to ground his theory of social change arguing that culture can mold how individuals comprehend and act in the world. He argues that because the Europeans and Hawaiians came from significantly divergent cultures, each brought their own ideas of how any given interaction should work or come off. These ideas or social norms for how to interact he calls cultural presuppositions. In the Cook example, neither the Europeans or Hawaiians were fully aware of their own or the other group's cultural presuppositions, so neither ever thought to take these into account in their interactions.

Unfortunately for Cook himself, his arrival had coincided precisely with the harvest festival of Makahiki in which the god Lono is worshipped. According to Sahlins, because Cook arrived when Lono was expected, he was mistaken by the Hawaiians as this god. However, when by chance his actions diverged from what was expected of Lono, they resulted in Cook's death by local Hawaiians. More importantly for Sahlins, though, are the interactions between the Europeans and Hawaiians that occurred before Cook's death. Focusing on the impact of these interactions on the Hawaiians, Sahlins (1981, 50) offers that the mismatch of European and Hawaiian cultural presuppositions "bought the Hawaiians into uncharacteristic conditions of internal conflict and contradiction" because the Europeans allowed for interactions to take place not only between themselves (taken to be gods) and the chiefs (whose place it was to interact with deities) but between these supposed gods and regular Hawaiians. In addition to commoners suddenly having access to these gods independent of their chiefs, women were also given access and some had sexual relations with these 'gods.' Such widespread access made the chiefs' position less necessary resulting a significant upheaval in the society's structure and changing the cultural presuppositions of many Hawaiians.

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[6] See especially Obeyesekere's 1992 book *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* for a contradictory view of these interactions.

Sahlins in his discussion of these interactions focuses on what he calls the *structure of the conjuncture* by which he is referring to the aggregate of interactions that developed between the Europeans and Hawaiians because of their mismatch in cultural presuppositions. He suggests that in this contact between two differing cultures both parties assume the other is acting according to the same norms as they. However, when it becomes clear that something different is happening and this difference is beneficial to (or forced upon) one or both parties, culture change occurs. In Sahlins's eighteenth century example, two very different cultures came into contact. Yet, Sahlins is aware that in this globalizing world that such situations are extremely rare. Thus, he widens the applicability of this structure of the conjuncture through the following statement:

> Still, all these processes are occurring in the same general way within any society, independently of radical differences in culture, so long as actors with *partially distinct concepts and projects* relate their actions to each other—and to a world that may prove refractory to the understandings of any and all concerned. (1981, 68; emphasis mine)

Here Sahlins makes clear that one need not have wide-reaching cultural differences in order for a conjuncture like that between the Europeans and Hawaiians to result. Actors only need to bring 'partially distinct concepts and projects', in other words moderately different cultural presuppositions, to an interaction for the possibility of social change to be present.

Unfortunately, Sahlins does little to tease out what would constitute such 'concepts and projects' or what he means by 'partially distinct.' His theory of social change, while grounded in specific examples, does not provide a framework for linking such large-scale changes to how actions emerge and are negotiated among individuals and groups. I suggest, though, that where Sahlins's theory falls short, it is also complemented by the notion of a community of practice. The synthesis of these two theories provides a means of linking on-the-ground action to large-scale changes. For the concepts and projects of which Sahlins speaks can be seen as analogous to Eckert's "ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values—in short, practices" (2000, 35) that emerge in a community of practice. Although much work on communities of practice has focused on the inner workings of these communities, interactions do occur across community boundaries. Just as Sahlins suggested in his discussion of interactions between Europeans and Hawaiians, so too members of diverging communities of practice bring dissimilar cultural presuppositions to interactions. These interactions—comprising a structure of the conjuncture—are

then impacted by one or both group's presuppositions, possibly effecting social changes.

A blending of Sahlins's theory and communities of practice can be applied to understand social change occurring between the three youth communities in McLeod Ganj. I suggest that the differing concepts and projects in these youth communities are tied to the differing migration trajectories (Berg 2009) of these groups. As a reminder, migration trajectories for Tibetan exile youth are the complex interplay of age at migration, education received in exile, as well as respective wave of migration. These imbue members of these communities of practice with differing ways of doing things and so divergent cultural presuppositions. Thus, in interactions between members of these communities, these differing practices and presuppositions may not match those of their interlocutor. Out of these misunderstandings social change may occur.

Before delving further into the mechanics of this proposed synthesis, it is important to note some of the critical critiques that have been leveled at Sahlins's theory. Sherry Ortner (1984) stated that in Sahlins's example, change is all too mechanistic. In addition, it seems to assume that, in the face of differing cultural presuppositions, change necessarily occurs. This is not always the case, though. As Ortner (1984, 156) states, "mature actors are not all that flexible." To which I would add that even youthful actors can exhibit a degree of inflexibility. Thus, in his discussion of social change, Sahlins also falls short in addressing that change occurs differently across interactions, cultures, and communities. In the next section, we get a view into the lives of three Tibetan exile youth two we met in earlier chapters and one we did not. These short excerpts from their lives demonstrate the different rates at which change occurs in their interactions with youth of other communities of practice. I have termed these rates of change slippage, drag,[7] and change. I use these three terms in an attempt to tease apart the relative speeds at which social change can occur, ultimately moving away from the mechanistic view that Sahlins suggests.

Slippage, Drag, and Change

One of the strengths of the concept of a community of practice is that the shared ways of doing things that develop within a community does not

[7] I have borrowed this term from Ortner (1984).

necessarily place language use at the center of the community. Shared ways of doing things—or practices—can be as simple as wearing a certain type of shoe, hanging out at a particular coffee shop, but also using language to emphasize certain aspects of everyday life, such as familial and non-familial relationships. When members of differing communities of practice come into contact and notice differences between their and another's practices, they may take up those practices immediately (change), take them up much later after having observed such practices many times (drag), or ignore them for reasons of status, access, economics and the like (slippage). In each of the short vignettes below we see each of these differing rates of change occurring. But first, it is important to make clear what is meant by the terms slippage, drag, and change.

Slippage refers to situations in which differences in practices go by unnoticed or are deliberately ignored by those involved. This idea accounts for individuals' 'smoothing over' difference without considering these differences as possibilities for their own practices. It could almost be said that here that reproduction is failed change. For although an opportunity for change occurs, this chance fails. Slippage is important because neither does it assume or rule out that a lack of change is part of a plan or a strategy. It also does not presuppose that actors are always attentive and engaged, but that difference may just 'slip' past any given actor unnoticed.

The second avenue, drag, mentioned above borrows from Ortner's statement regarding the importance of accounting for transformation that does not happen over a short period. She states, "more important is the sort of 'drag' introduced into the system by the fact that, as a result of enculturation, actors embody the system as well as living within in it" (1984, 156). This idea of drag accounts for interactions in which differences in ways of doing things are noticed but change does not occur immediately. It may take several repetitions in which differences in practices are noticed before any change occurs, and these iterations may take several years or even generations.

Iterations of interactions where there is a mismatch of practices create what Raymond Williams calls "an unease, a displacement, a latency" (1977, 130) and tie in important ways into his notion of *structures of feeling*. These structures of feeling are "nascent changes in meanings and values" (Ahearn 2001, 53) that over time via repetitions of the same or similar interactions between individuals with divergent practices effect a change in the practices of one or both of the parties. To begin, individuals may not be necessarily aware of this mismatch in how they do things; they merely feel the 'unease' of which Williams writes. Eventually, this

unease resolves either by becoming 'common practice' or by undergoing slippage because of too few iterations or due to a rejection of this way of doing things.

In addition to slippage and drag, change does at times occur as quickly as Sahlins describes. Especially in contexts of forced and mass migrations, it seems likely that change could occur rather rapidly. In such migration contexts, not only do those who have migrated come in contact with new ideas and ways of doing things that are prevalent among their host culture, but often they also have left behind their material goods, businesses, social networks and the like. In such situations, individuals and groups are more often open to cultural and linguistic adjustments. In order to reestablish themselves in this new location, change occurs much more frequently and easily than among groups who are well-established.

Vignette 3-1: Palden Paljor's Resistance

In chapter two, we met Palden Paljor who belongs to the New Arrival community in McLeod. He had arrived from Tibet about eight years before I met him as a participant in my research. Like most New Arrivals he studied at the Tibetan Transit School and so could speak English. He had been well-educated in Tibet having learned to write poetry in the Tibetan. In fact, among New Arrivals he was known as something of a poet-intellectual. He and his friends enjoyed spending time playing cards and debating world and local politics at a small neighborhood bar.

In some ways, though, Palden was very different from my other participants. He was one of two participants who never spoke to me in English. It was clear he understood English as his friends often used English with me when we were all together. However, he never once did. Moreover, when he gave me his writings at the end of my project, it was a collection of over two hundred letters, lists, notes, but mainly original poetry. The number wasn't so remarkable as the fact that there was not one piece in English. All were in Tibetan, some with dates and a few words in Chinese along the margins. As I read through all of his poems, I found that his unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life in McLeod came through in his later poems. The excerpt from his poem "A Surplus of Dispute" below singles out language as a component of his discontent:

> One: winning is knowing (written) English
> Two: winning is emptying (written) Tibetan
> Three: nationality is money
> These three have millions happy [Tibetan]

For Palden, refusing to speak English was a form of resistance to what he saw as a betrayal by Tibetans in India of their language and thus, their Tibetan identity.

This vignette exemplifies a slippage in that it is failed change. Palden learned English as he was required while a student at the TTS but in his everyday conversations and the writings he gave me, he almost entirely ignores the norms of language usage among Tibetan youth. This example also demonstrates that while slippage can go by unnoticed, at times it is a very intentional choice on the part of the community member. These slippages either unnoticed or intentional are not inconsequential actions by these youth. Instead, they are ways in which boundaries between communities of practice are policed and maintained. In this case, Palden's almost total refusal to mix English with his Tibetan is, in part, an effort to mark himself as a New Arrival or at least not as a Born Refugee. Even when a slippage goes by unnoticed, the enduring differences in practices that result can inform both parties in an interaction that they belong to differing communities, that they are not the same.

Vignette 3-2: Pasang Dikyi's Conflicting Sentiments

Pasang Dikyi, a Born Refugee, was first introduced in chapter one where I analyzed the list of cigarettes she had written for an Indian shopkeeper. She is a member of a prominent McLeod Ganj family. Her extended family—mother, father, uncle, sisters, brothers, and a few cousins—live together in one large house below the bus stand. She lives a comfortable life in this affluent household. She is college and graduate school educated, like many other Born Refugees, having benefitted from her family having been well-established in exile for some time. She has a close relationship with her parents, especially her father. Over the years, I have come to be good friends with Dikyi. She is a happy, compassionate, caring, and socially conservative youth. She is quick to smile and equally quick to help anyone.

One day I was visiting her while she was tending the family store. I had made an appointment to meet with her to talk about the writings she had given me as part of my study. When I arrived her sister came up with a thermos of hot water and cups for both of us, knowing that I had the same 'odd habit' as Dikyi of opting for hot water instead of the ubiquitous milk tea. It was a cold winter afternoon in the unheated store, so the hot water was very welcome. As Dikyi's sister left the store, I pulled out some of the writings she had given me. Many of them related to family either by

mentioning family members or having been emails to distant family. As she looked them over, she said how good it is that her family is close by and can give her a break and watch the store for her. I agreed mentioning how nice it was the other day when the egg supplier brought new stock that everyone came running up from the house to help unload, count, and check the quality of the eggs with her.

I then asked her about the one email she gave me that had been sent to a friend, the only such non-family centered writing in her collection. She began talking about the importance of friends. She said that family was more important to her but she enjoyed her friends, too. She went on to say that she felt sorry for youth who do not have family in exile, because having her parents to help her made her life much easier. But, too, she admitted to being slightly envious of them. She observed that these young people—Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals—have fewer constraints on how they spend their time than youth like her who live with their family. She knows that they have a more difficult time making their way, but that there are more and more who succeed, often with the help of friends. For these youth she has immense respect. As Dikyi and many other youth in McLeod have told me, being without family allows these youth to "stand on their own feet."

In this vignette, Dikyi is voicing what previously had most probably been an unease and is showing the beginnings of a shift in values. Youth without immediate family have been living in McLeod since the beginnings of the Tibetan diaspora. In the early years, parents sometimes died on the trek out of Tibet, and the practice of sending children into exile by parents in Tibet is a long-standing one. Moreover, there have been instances of successful Semi-Orphans for a long time in McLeod. However, as I discuss in chapter 7, family has long been and still is the central social unit in Tibetan exile communities. It has taken a long time for this shift in the value of friend-based relationships to emerge. Yet, now among Born Refugees, friends seem to be becoming increasingly important. Thus, the conflicting sentiments that Dikyi has about family and friends is due to a long term drag that may lead to some degree of social change. However, it is important to state that because there seems to be a shift toward greater value on friendship, it does not mean that the shift will continue in this direction. It may or it may move back toward greater value on the long standing institution of the Tibetan family.

Vignette 3-3: 'A Good Place to Learn English'
One New Arrival I worked with, named Lopsang Gyatso, had come into exile just a few months prior to our meeting. I met him through an American ex-patriot, Greg, who had moved to McLeod for a slower pace of life and had started teaching English as a volunteer teacher at one of the many free English schools in town. Lopsang was a student in his advanced English class. When Lopsang began participation in my project, he had just been hired as a waiter at a tourist restaurant in town. Among New Arrivals, these are often coveted positions because they are easier than kitchen work and allow these youth to practice their English and meet foreign tourists. Moreover, he was given the responsibility of managing the restaurant when the owner went home between the lunch and dinner shifts. Given Lopsang's relatively short period of time in exile, I was surprised both by his ability to participate in Greg's advanced English class and his gaining such a well-regarded position at the restaurant.

Lopsang was still feeling homesick and unsure of himself when I met him, though. He had left the Amdo region of Tibet where he had been a monk, but gave up the monastic life soon after coming into India. He had first lived in the Tibetan settlement of Bylakuppe in South India but moved to McLeod Ganj with the express purpose of learning English. Lopsang looked different from many other New Arrivals living in McLeod in the early 2000s. He had short very neatly groomed hair and a quiet bookish demeanor. He had trouble making friends with other New Arrivals. He lived alone (a rarity among New Arrivals given the high rents in McLeod) and rarely spoke of friends, except one living in South India. Lopsang gave me a letter to this friend in his collection of writings. In this letter, he wrote, "In Dharamsala, as I am living and doing well, I am learning English. . . . Here is a good place to learn English" [Tibetan].

Having met Lopsang soon after he arrived from Tibet and watching him throughout my dissertation research and even today keeping in touch with him, it is clear that he has benefitted from learning English in exile. Many New Arrivals study English and become quite proficient, often shifting toward using English as their primary written language over Tibetan. The rate at which these changes in their language practices comes about shares some commonalities with Sahlins's depiction of change among the Hawaiians. In fact, I would suggest that this linguistic change happens much faster among these New Arrival youth. In the case of Lopsang, within three years of leaving Tibet he had learned English well enough to

meet a foreign woman, marry her, and move to the United States. While the marriage did not last long, his language skills helped him to find work and remain in the United States where he now has citizenship.

In the chapters that follow, I examine the ways in which literacy is used by these three youth communities of practice to effect and not to effect social change, weaving throughout these differing rates at which changes occur.

PART TWO

HISTORIES AND WRITINGS OF KYAMKYAM AND SHAPSHU

CHAPTER FOUR

'COME TO LEARN, GO TO SERVE'

In every city, town, village or community ideas about how to dress, how to sit, when it is appropriate to laugh or joke, etc. circulate among community members. People talk about how one should act if they are male or female, old or young. These conversations present us not only with options for action but also constrain what is possible or at least appropriate for individuals to do. Grounded in actual exchanges and dialogues, these ideas have come to be over time, be it days, years or decades, and so have their own history. Throughout their history, these ideas are reinforced or changed by each time someone comments on another's attire or when they decide something is funny enough to laugh about. Over time these individual utterances and conversations gain some cohesion and in a general sense they come to be agreed upon by a community.

In anthropology, these ways of talking about dressing, gender, laughing, and a myriad of other practices are called social discourses. In McLeod Ganj, two activities kyamkyam 'roaming' and shapshu 'service' are ubiquitous in the community's social discourses. Across young and old, kyamkyam has come to be associated with Tibetan youth participating in social activities that take place outside the home and generally apart from family. Many older Tibetans devalue some forms of kyamkyam and talk about it in opposition to the being *nang la* 'at home.' Among youth, however, kyamkyam is engaged in as leisure for some, and a lifestyle for others. Kyamkyam is also related in complex ways to the second idea mentioned above shapshu or 'service.' Shapshu, which is used almost as frequently in English as in Tibetan, also circulates in community discourses. In McLeod Ganj, seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, service has come to refer to whether one's job contributes to the Tibetan exile community. It is generally agreed that working for the CTA is service. However, over the past two decades definitions of service have further shifted and expanded, especially for Tibetan youth.

Despite the above statement that community discourses are generally agreed upon by members of a community, there is also significant heterogeneity that stems in part from the history, or all the prior uses, of these words or ideas. Through the history of any given discourse the 'voice' of

each of these previous people's uses and exchanges comes through. To put it in Mikhail Bakthin's words, each use of these words has "the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life" (1981, 293). Bakhtin terms this 'taste' heteroglossia.

Community discourses that circulate in communities are a collection of contradictory and conciliatory, in other words, heteroglossic, contexts of usage. Every use of 'kyamkyam' or 'shapshu' provides yet another voice in this heteroglossia of community discourses. Future uses of these words then rely upon past uses for their meaning. This is what Bakhtin (1981, 294) meant when he said that "language is not a neutral medium . . . [but] is populated . . . with the intentions of others." Thus, whenever a word is used, it evokes not only the speaker's but many other speakers' meanings, too. These multiple meanings, heard in many voices, constitute community discourses that in fact circulate in any community. Thus, whenever one speaks, they are situating their utterances in a tension-filled social space replete with others' meanings for any given word while attempting to make their own meaning heard above the noise.

Bakhtin also recognized that along with this heteroglossia comes stratification of these voices. For reasons particular to the sociohistorical context of each utterance, certain voices are privileged over others for reasons of status, profession, authority, age, class and the like. These privileged voices shape the 'unitary' (Bakhtin 1981) core of community discourses and are at times in opposition to the heterogeneity of heteroglossia. In terms of kyamkyam and shapshu, the utterances of elders form these unitary community discourses in tension with those of youth, creating generational divisions in the community. Yet even among youth's discourses regarding kyamkyam and shapshu there isn't complete unity. Instead of age, though, membership in differing communities of practice comes into play, with the voices of those raised in exile dominating the heteroglossia introduced by New Arrivals' voices.

In the next sections, I discuss these divisions based on generation and community of practice in McLeod Ganj through an examination of kyamkyam and shapshu. Both of these terms are prominently positioned in community discourses, though often antithetically, mirroring divisions both (1) across generations and (2) between Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals. Among older Tibetans, the practice of kyamkyam is specifically walking to the main temple and circumambulating it as part of religious practice and has become for some synonymous with the Tibetan

term *kora*. While this definition is part of youth conceptions of kyamkyam, for youth activities such as surfing the Internet, meeting friends at a café, walking around the market, and going to a friend's house are also included. Because of their broad definition of kyamkyam and the perceived frequency of their engagement in it, kyamkyam has come to be closely associated with youth.

Kyamkyam: Generations, Lifestyles, and Leisure

> *Heidi, it is so good how I see you every night coming in and going right up to your room. You don't go roaming around.—Born Refugee, 24 years old*

At about 5:00 pm or so everyday, Temple Road, which leads from the Market to the Tsuklhakhang (the main temple), becomes congested with Tibetans walking down to circumambulate the temple building. There are families with small children, groups of young women and young men talking and laughing as they navigate the people and traffic, but mostly there are older Tibetans many carrying spinning prayer wheels. While this is plainly a religious observance, it is also a social event, a time to catch up with friends and share news. At the temple, most people walk around the building several times then they return home or sit on one of the many benches in front of the temple to chat and watch small children run and play in one of the few sizeable flat spaces in this mountain village.

If you ask any of these older people what they are doing as they walk down to and around the temple, they will often answer 'kyamkyam.' It is this form of kyamkyam that community discourses class as legitimate. Not only is it good for the spirit and the body as a religious as well as physical activity, but it also recreates an everyday practice many of these individuals enjoyed in pre-Chinese Tibet. These same community discourses, though, do not value other forms of kyamkyam so highly.

In chapter 1, I recounted the story of how my Tibetan language teacher chastised me for saying that I had engaged in kyamkyam. Over the many times I have returned to McLeod Ganj since that summer, similar admonishments have been repeated in various forms by other Tibetans in the community. Sometimes they take the shape of advice about how kyamkyam can damage my reputation as a female and apparent youth in the community, or as praise for answering a usual Tibetan greeting between friends 'kabar dro ge?' or 'Where are you going?' with the reply "nang la dro" or 'I'm going home,' and even more oblique references such as my landlady telling me that she was worried about me when she didn't see my light on the previous evening at 9:00 pm.

For youth living in McLeod Ganj, the meaning of kyamkyam has significantly expanded beyond the two meanings common among older Tibetans, namely, 'to go for a walk' and 'to walk to and around the Temple.' For them, it now includes activities that are both viewed positively and rarely include religious observance, diverging from elder and more conservative Tibetans. Among the youth I interviewed, only 7% of the answers to the question "What is kyamkyam?" referred to going to the temple for circumambulation. Many however did say that kyamkyam was simply going for a walk (19%). But the two most common definitions of kyamkyam among youth centered on activities with friends outside the home: 'roaming around town with friends' constituted 23% of the answers, while 'hanging out and talking to friends' made up 20%. Twenty-two percent of the answers was made up of various responses, such as sports, Internet surfing, parties, watching TV/movies, picnicking, and shopping.

Tibetan youth are aware of elders' negative or at best neutral evaluations of the sort of kyamkyam in which they engage. When I interviewed youth about this pastime, I would begin by saying something to the effect of "You know kyamkyam?" Most often the response would be a laugh and a statement such as, "Ahhh. Kyamkyam. Yes, I know." It is not unusual to hear older Tibetans complaining about and to youth about doing too much kyamkyam, such as in the conversation I had at the conclusion of an interview in 2001 with a Tibetan man, named Dondüp, in his late sixties that is described in the following vignette.

Vignette 4-1: Dondüp, Kyamkyam, and Kasa Kala

Just as I finish the interview with Dondüp he asks me what I do with my free time. I reply that I usually only have free time in the evenings and that I spend it at home. Dondüp says that staying *nang la* 'at home' is best. He goes on to say that the problem with *bö shönkye* 'Tibetan youth' is that they are always going kyamkyam and *kasa kala* 'here and there.' They never stay at home.

His son, who appears to be in his late twenties, had come in toward the end of the interview and is sitting and listening to our conversation. When Dondüp begins to talk about the problems of Tibetan youth and kyamkyam, his son smiles and shakes his head. After Dondüp finishes speaking, I look over at the son. The young man smiles, saying in English that many older Tibetans give the same advice. I reply that I have heard it many times. The son walks me to the door of the room he shares with his father. As I leave, I turn and thank Dondüp for the interview and the advice.

Discourses construct kyamkyam as simultaneously beneficial religiously and physically as well as detrimental to one's reputation and family. By linking these valuations to elders and youth, respectively, these discourses create and reinforce divergent identities based on age and generation. It is not only elders who through their talk about kyamkyam construct these divergent identities. In interviews conducted in the summer of 2008 with forty-two Tibetan youth on topics including kyamkyam, 43% of the total responses to the question "Who likes to kyamkyam?" reported that youth like kyamkyam. In fact, 'youth' was the most frequent answer to this question. 25% of the responses also indicated that older people like to kyamkyam. However, almost all specified that for older people kyamkyam is exclusively going to the temple to circumambulate. Thus, through these discourses about kyamkyam both youth and their elders are negotiating a generational divide, placing themselves and others as certain types of people. Kyamkyam, though, is employed to do more than construct and reinforce generational divisions. Among youth, the vast majority of whom engage in kyamkyam regularly, there exist distinctions between different practices of kyamkyam. These community discourses of kyamkyam among youth function to divide youth into divergent groups with differing identities but most importantly as members of differing communities of practice.

Among youth, one's participation in kyamkyam is classed along a continuum between kyamkyam as a practice of leisure or as a lifestyle. The difference between kyamkyam as lifestyle or leisure can be seen in the duration, frequency, and hour of engagement in this activity. When kyamkyam is leisure, it is usually engaged in several days a week for an hour or two, most often as one walks home from work at the end of the day. Soon after 5:00 pm, the market area becomes busy with people picking up something for dinner, running errands, or circumambulating the temple, but also stopping to visit with a friend at a coffee shop or at their home. However, by about 6:30 most of these people have moved on toward home, leaving the market area quiet and the streets less than busy. For youth, though, who experience kyamkyam as a lifestyle, one engages in kyamkyam most likely daily, at any time of the day, and at times for much longer periods. Tea stalls on Jogibara Road, where housing is generally cheaper, are often full throughout the day with youth. In the evenings, a time generally considered in community discourses to be the least favorable period for kyamkyam, young Tibetans often hang out in the streets, smoking cigarettes, talking, and in winter crowding around small fires in metal cans.

The distinction between kyamkyam as leisure or lifestyle is generally reflected in one's membership in the Born Refugee or Semi-Orphan and New Arrival communities, respectively. Yet there are New Arrivals, like Dorje below, who participate in kyamkyam as leisure not lifestyle. For the most part though, lifestyle or leisure divides along differing migration trajectories with New Arrivals engaging in kyamkyam for longer durations and at more frequent intervals than Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans. Below are three excerpts from interviews with two Born Refugees and one New Arrival. The first two highlight duration and the third frequency as parameters for judging the 'right' practices of kyamkyam.

> *Excerpt 1:*
>
> Heidi: "Who likes kyamkyam?"
>
> Dorje: "It's good. . . . Just for me, uhh if you work very hard at the day, you have to kyamkyam at evening just for hour. You have to kyamkyam 'cause good to hanging out. Because if you going to kyamkyam, it's giving you relaxation."
>
> Heidi: "So people who work, they like kyamkyam?"
>
> Dorje: "They like kyamkyam for a few hour one hours something two hours. But some people they said I'm going to kyamkyam, but this whole day. For this no working no studying. They studying, don't working for them kyamkyam. . . . They go to Dharamsala whole day. We call them *kyamkyi*."

> *Excerpt 2:*
>
> Pema: "What kind of people like kyamkyam? If people always going kyamkyam is not good. But sometimes it is very good to kyamkyam to go to look outside and visiting outside is good."
>
> Heidi: "It is good to do it sometimes?"
>
> Pema: "Yeah. But not daily or all the time."

In these two excerpts from interviews, Dorje and Pema place conditions on the acceptable duration for kyamkyam. Pema suggests that doing kyamkyam sometimes is good but all the time is not, while Dorje is more explicit in his limitations of what he considers to be good kyamkyam that is maybe one or two hours a day. Dorje also uses the term *kyamkyi* 'roaming dog' in reference to youth who engage in kyamkyam for too long. They are like the generally harmless dogs that roam many of the marketplaces all over India. Dorje also briefly links working with engaging in shorter durations of kyamkyam. In the excerpt below Kunsang more explicitly

states that people who are employed engage in the right amount of kyamkyam.

> *Excerpt 3:*
>
> Heidi: "Who likes kyamkyam? Who thinks kyamkyam is good?"
>
> Kunsang: "There are these people, the youth they working. They work in society. Maybe they work in restaurant. . . . So sometimes they get uhh free time and they use to kyamkyam yeah. . . . People like me. I know in uhh in seven days in one day they have uhh day off. They go to kyamkyam."

In this excerpt, Kunsang states that working youth, those who have access to jobs they like to kyamkyam because it is a way of relaxing on the one day a week they generally do not work. Above I stated that in interviews youth (43%) and older Tibetans (25%) are the top two answers to the question "who likes kyamkyam?" An additional 20% of responses to this question indicated that unemployed people also like to kyamkyam, but often specifying that those unemployed frequently engage in kyamkyam too much. More interestingly, 47% of answers to the question "who does not like to kyamkyam?" stated that individuals who were employed did not like to kyamkyam. These answers highlight a link between kyamkyam and employment, where unemployed people are perceived to engage in kyamkyam too frequently and for longer durations but employed individuals participate in kyamkyam in moderation. In other words, the unemployed engage in kyamkyam as a lifestyle while the employed engage in it as leisure. However, access to work and the types of work that are valued in the exile community are not evenly distributed across youth with differing migration trajectories. Moreover, we will see in the next section that employment and kyamkyam are intertwined with community notions of shapshu or service, creating an environment in which kyamkyam as lifestyle is seen as antithetical to shapshu but kyamkyam as leisure is seen as complementary.

Shapshu: 'Come to Learn, Go to Serve'

Like kyamkyam, the term shapshu 'service' has undergone some changes in its usage in the exile communities. In Tibet, it could be used to refer to a government official (*shapdegpa*), aristocratic officials of the Tibetan government (*shapdopa*), a member of the Tibetan cabinet or Kashag (*shappa*) among other uses (Goldstein et al. 2001). However, in exile the

use of shapshu has expanded beyond purely governmental meanings and become politicized. Beyond these strictly governmental associations, this term can be used to refer to working for the CTA or associated NGOs but also includes actions done for the good of the Tibetan communities in exile. In interviews, we were told by members of all three youth communities that efforts to raise the global awareness of Tibet's occupation as well as helping Tibetans in general constitute shapshu or service to the Tibetan community. This expanded definition of service politicizes the act of contributing to the Tibetan community, creating ties between service and being 'true' member of the exile community.

In McLeod Ganj, shapshu is a common component in discourses circulating in the community, be it from parents, youth, or the local schools. The Tibetan Children's Villages explicitly promote students' service to the community through community service projects, peaceful protest marches, as well as in more durable forms such as signage. From a young age, Tibetan children, who grow up in exile, are taught to highly value service to the Tibetan community. The picture in Figure 4-1 is from the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) just above McLeod Ganj where the majority of exile-raised Tibetan children attend school.



Figure 4-1: Come to Learn, Go to Serve. Photo by Heidi Swank

This building, with its phrase "Come to Learn, Go to Serve", overlooks the athletic field where many school and community events take place. The prominent placement of this directive not only reinforces the importance of service among the TCV students, but also reminds alumni and parents of the importance placed by the government and educational institution on service to their community. Even the TCV's motto "Others before Self", which appears on everything from the official website to textbooks to buildings and garbage cans on the TCV campus, implies service. In fact, among youth I interviewed regarding service, the most common response to the question "Who doesn't serve the Tibetan community?" was individuals who only think of themselves, in other words, those who live contrary to the TCV's motto by putting the self before others.

Most frequently, service is couched in terms of the type of employment one holds in the community. Dorsh Marie de Voe as well as other researchers[1] also discussed the link between service and employment in McLeod Ganj:

> [I]n the refugee context, success is viewed as working for 'the cause' which, loosely construed, includes careers, employment, or volunteer service to, for, and with Tibetans and Tibetan institutions. A driver who shuttles Tibetan government workers about is 'better' than one who chauffeurs an Indian or western family though the latter might earn a higher salary. . . . The fact that a Tibetan works for the Tibetans is key in evaluating the job and the person in it. (1987, 62)

This tie between certain types of employment and service often leads parents to encourage their children to try to find work with the CTA or related NGO, such as the Tibetan Women's Assocation, or at least for a Tibetan employer in one of the refugee settlements. Such employment I refer to as 'high-service' work, the epitome of high service work is a position, paid or unpaid, with the exile government.

Because of this preference for high-service work, parents of Born Refugees will not infrequently send their newly university-graduated son or daughter to live in McLeod Ganj. While living in McLeod Ganj, these youth can often find a volunteer position in one of the exile government offices or at least be able to easily learn about employment opportunities either in McLeod Ganj or at one of the government's branch offices. These young people are usually financially supported through their

[1] Houston and Wright (2003, 221) quote one CTA workers as saying, "young people 'are brought up under this standard line that when you grow up you have to work for the government."

parents' remittances. These volunteer positions do after some time often turn into permanent paid employment, though some return home after several months or even years without having gained the prestigious employment for which they came to McLeod. Among New Arrivals and Semi-Orphans, taking a volunteer position is not usually possible as they lack the financial support of older generations. In addition, the CTA requires an exam in both English and Tibetan language proficiency. While this exam is not problematic for most Semi-Orphans, New Arrivals have a difficult time achieving the level of English required to pass the exam.

Among the youth I interviewed, there were some marked differences in unemployment rates.[2] Born Refugees were the most likely to be employed with 30% of the youth I interviewed stating that they were unemployed. However, this sample included some unusual youths, who, despite having grown up in exile, had only three years of education. Without these youths, unemployment numbers among Born Refugees are only at 12%, making them similar to the 16% unemployment reported among Semi-Orphans. While these may still seem like very high numbers, for New Arrivals numbers were significantly higher with 66% of interviewees unemployed. Several New Arrivals talked about hoping to find work as a translator or other higher-service employment once they had mastered English. Moreover, while Semi-Orphans and Born Refugees reported having positions with the Tibetan Women's Association (a local NGO) and teaching at the TCV, employed New Arrivals most commonly worked at a restaurant or guesthouse. Many more, though, attend one or more of the free English schools in town hoping English proficiency will be the key to high-service work.

In the past twenty years, employment with the exile government has become increasingly difficult to secure. When the parents of Born Refugee youth were younger, employment opportunities with the exile government were not so scarce. Most Tibetan youth with a secondary or post-secondary degree could secure a job with the growing exile government. By the 1990s, though, the exile government's growth had slowed resulting in fewer jobs for new graduates. Thus, in the 1990s:

[2] It is important to note that given the small numbers of interviewees (n = 42) and the sampling procedures used (respondent driven sampling, street intercept sampling) these numbers are preliminary at best. However, given the dramatic difference in unemployment rates between New Arrivals and other youth in exile, at a minimum these numbers do indicate that there are unemployment differences across these communities of practice.

> [T]he Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Administration [began] advising new graduates to seek employment outside the Tibetan community. . . . [unlike] the Tibetan Administration of the earlier days in exile, when well qualified Tibetans were in short supply. (Bernabei 2001, 109–10)

Despite the relative dearth of high-service work in recent years, parents and youth on the whole continue to seek out such employment. For instance, Houston and Wright (2003, 221) quote one CTA volunteer as explaining, "'It's a small way to serve our government. It's good to serve our government, community, and society.'" So pervasive is this sentiment regarding serving the Tibetan community that it isn't unusual for youth to forego low-service work in hopes of finding something that is seen as a higher-service position. In the vignette below, we meet a young man who was attempting to explain to two female foreign tourists why he did not want to take a job doing construction (a relatively low-service position) in town.

Vignette 4-2: Waiting for the 'Right' Work

One evening during one of my extended fieldwork visits to McLeod Ganj, I was having dinner at Nick's Italian Kitchen on Bhagsu Road. The tables at Nick's accommodate up to eight people and since there are very few tables in what was then a tiny restaurant, it was common that you would share your table with another group. On this evening I was sharing a table with three young people, two foreign women and a male New Arrival, all of whom seemed to be in their twenties. From the conversation, it seemed the women had met the young man earlier that afternoon. He had helped them find their way when they were looking for the Dalai Lama's temple. After an afternoon of showing them about town, the women took the young man, Shakya, to dinner at Nick's.

After they sat down and ordered their meals, the women asked Shakya what he did for a living. He told them that he was a student at some of the free English schools in town, but was looking for work. He went on to talk about the difficulties of living in McLeod without a job and how hard it was to find work. The women listened sympathetically. After several minutes of his explanation, one woman said that there seemed to be many construction projects going on in town. Couldn't he find work at one of those? Shakya paused seeming unsure of how to proceed. Then replied that he wanted to find 'office work.' At this point, the two women seemed to lose interest in his plight. After a meaningful look between them, they quickly finished the food that had arrived and seemed to part ways with the young man.

Julia Hess noted a similar disposition in one young man she called Tashi, a New Arrival, that sheds a bit more favorable light on both of these young men's orientations to employment. When asked by Hess (2009, 136) why he didn't take a job in a restaurant in McLeod he replied, "'Why should I work for [500 rupees] per month (roughly $10) and not have enough to eat and no time to study?'" From Tashi's perspective the types of employment he could expect to get in McLeod paid so little and took so much of his time that they weren't worth it. Yet another New Arrival expressed similar sentiments as Tashi in an article in a local English language newsletter. The article, entitled 'The Costs of Living', aimed to raise awareness of the difficult employment market New Arrivals face:

> The only job I could get was in a restaurant. They paid me 500 [rupees][3] per month to work 8am–11pm every day. Rent is usually 700/800 [rupees] per month for one room. What can I do? I have no family here. (Brown 2003, 7)

Some youth, like Tashi above, look to foreign sponsorships as their sole means of financial support. Sponsorship by foreign individuals is common in the Tibetan exile communities.[4] Many families pay for school supplies and other needs by securing their child a sponsor through the Tibetan Children's Village school.[5] Sometimes these sponsors go on to assist in paying for part or all of the young person's college or vocational education. However, for New Arrivals foreign sponsors are usually met in one of the many coffee or tea houses about town or while engaged in kyamkyam in the market. Yet there are those in the exile communities who see such sponsorship as breeding a dependency among sponsored children and youth (see also Hess 2009). In my experience, Born Refugee youth often try to distance themselves from any suggestion of a sponsor relationship with a foreigner. In two instances, I found that my presence made my male participant so uncomfortable that they joked with their interlocutor that they shouldn't think I was their sponsor.

The increased difficulty of obtaining high-service work in McLeod Ganj has contributed to a nascent meaning shift in this semantically expanded and politicized variant of shapshu that is common in exile. I say that this

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[3] About $10.00.

[4] Many researchers have discussed the role of foreign sponsorship in the Tibetan exile communities. Among these are Hess (2009); Klieger (1992); Frechette (2002); and Diehl (2002).

[5] The website for the Tibetan Children's Villages has a downloadable form for sponsoring a child. Currently, it costs $40 a month to sponsor a TCV student.

change is nascent because while the overwhelming majority of Tibetan youth told us in interviews that any work that contributes to the Tibetan community constitutes shapshu, their classifications of specific jobs commonly held in McLeod paint a somewhat different picture. As part of the interviews I've mentioned throughout this chapter, we asked interviewees to sort thirty cards, each with the name of a job commonly held in McLeod Ganj, into two piles: those that serve the Tibetan community and those that do not. We had hoped to examine the ways that Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals define service. However, Semi-Orphans as a rather small community were under-represented in our sample. Because their answers closely patterned those of Born Refugees, we conflated these two groups in our analysis of this portion of the interview data. Using the results of this pile sort, I was able to construct a relational map that illustrates the degree to which the jobs on the cards are thought of as related in terms of shapshu.

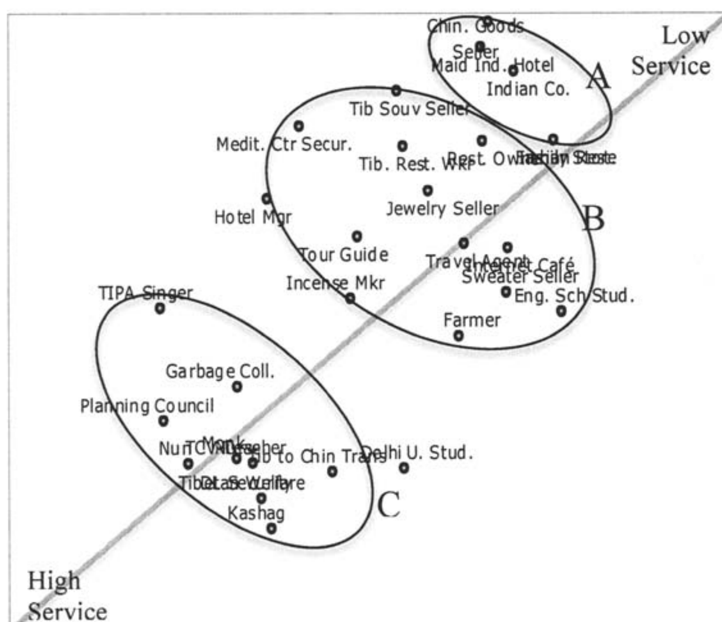
In each of the diagrams in Figures 4-2 and 4-3,[6] there is a dimension that runs diagonally along which each job's level of service can be seen. The figure on the left is an aggregate of Born Refugee & Semi-Orphan (BR/SO) responses, while the one on the right shows New Arrivals' composite responses.

Across these two charts, there is evidence that these youth have a shared orientation to service that is informed by community discourses of shapshu. Government positions (e.g. Dalai Lama's Security Guard, TCV Teacher) and those closely related to the government (e.g. Nun[7]) cluster together for both groups of youth. Moreover, the cluster of government positions is furthest from work that is tied to Tibet's occupier, China (e.g. Seller of Chinese Goods) and work that benefits the Indian sector (e.g. Maid at an Indian Hotel).

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[6] The responses for each individual were recorded in Excel in the form of a profile matrix where those jobs assigned to the 'serve' pile were assigned a 1 and those in the 'not serve' pile were assigned a 0. This information was then converted into a similarity matrix by figuring the percent of matches for all pairs of columns that can occur (Bernard 2006). I then aggregated the fourteen Born Refugee and Semi-Orphan similarity matrices into one sheet and the twenty-seven New Arrival similarity matrices into another sheet by averaging the score of each cell (e.g. B3) across individual similarity matrices. This resulted in two aggregate similarity matrices, one for each group. I then used multidimensional scaling to show the relationships among these jobs in relation to serving the Tibetan community.

[7] Nuns and monks are seen as closely allied with the Tibetan government for several reasons: (1) historically Tibet was a theocracy; (2) the Dalai Lama is a monk and remained until just recently at the head of the government; (3) monks have long held major positions in the Tibetan exile government including that of the Prime Minister.



Grouping A: Maid in an Indian Hotel, Seller of Chinese Goods, Waiter at an Indian Restaurant, Worker at an Indian Company, Worker at Family's Store.

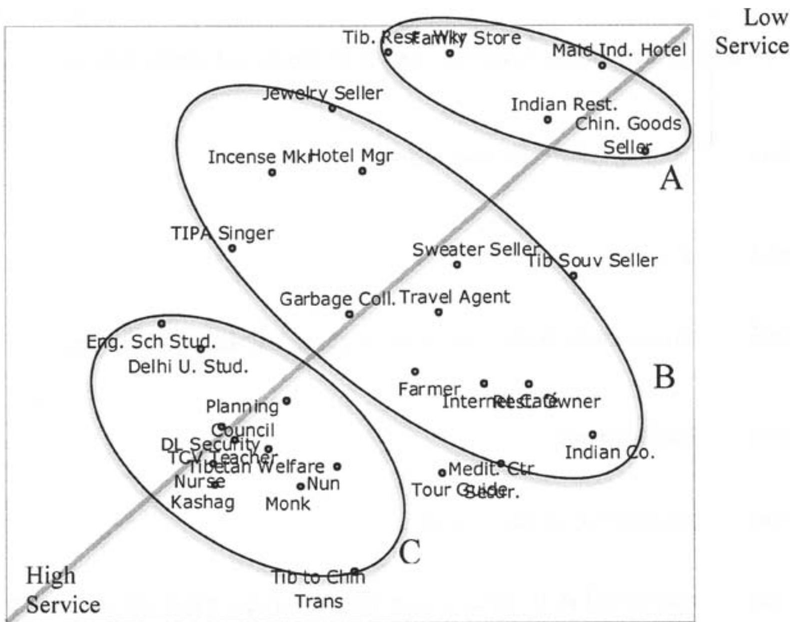
Group B: Dishwasher at a Tibetan Restaurant, Free English School Student, Farmer, Internet Café Owner, Security Guard at Tushita Meditation Center, Sweater Seller, Tibetan Hotel Manager, Tibetan Incense Maker, Tibetan Jewelry Seller, Tibetan Restaurant Owner, Tibetan Souvenir Seller, Tour Guide, Travel Agent.

Group C: *Dalai Lama's Security Guard, *Garbage Collector, *Kashag/Cabinet Member, Monk, Nun, *Nurse at the Tibetan Hospital, *Receptionist at the Planning Council, *TCV Teacher, *Tibetan Institute for the Performing Arts Singer, Tibetan to Chinese Translator, *Tibetan Welfare Office Worker. Peripheral Member: Delhi University Student.

*Central Tibetan Administration Offices, Branches, or Institutions

Figure 4-2: Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans[8]

[8] In two dimensions, the Born Refugee and Semi-Orphans data's Kruskal's stress was .145, within the accept range. However, the New Arrival data exhibited high stress (Kruskal's stress = >0.15), but the stress was resolved (i.e. .143) when moving into three dimensions. However, as the added dimension did not significantly change the results and because three dimensions is difficult to show on paper, I have included the two dimensional multidimensional scale here. It is important, though, to keep in mind when looking at the New Arrival chart that the relationship between closer items is less accurate than that between more distant items. In other words, the distance between the two circles drawn in Figure 4-2 is likely accurate but individual points that are close to each other (e.g. TCV teacher and DL security) are probably a bit less accurate.



Group A: Dishwasher at a Tibetan Restaurant, Maid at an Indian Hotel, Seller of Chinese Goods, Waiter at an Indian Restaurant, Worker at Family's Store.

Group B: Farmer, *Garbage Collector, Internet Café Owner, Jewelry Seller, Security Guard at Tushita Meditation Center, Sweater Seller, Tibetan Hotel Manager, Tibetan Incense Maker, Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts Singer, Tibetan Restaurant Owner, Tibetan Souvenir Seller, Travel Agent, Worker for an Indian Company.
Group B/C: Tour Guide

Group C: *Dalai Lama's Security Guard, Delhi University Student, Free English School Student, *Kashag/Cabinet Member, Monk, Nun, *Nurse at the Tibetan Hospital, *Receptionist for the Planning Council, *TCV Teacher, Tibetan to Chinese Translator, *Tibetan Welfare Office Worker.

Figure 4-3: New Arrivals

There are differences, though, with regard to the middle group of jobs (e.g. Sweater Seller, Tour Guide), which I call moderate-service work. For the BR/SO group, the distance between moderate- and high-service work is much greater than it is for New Arrivals. Among BR/SO moderate-service work clusters close to the low-service work, while for New Arrivals many of the same jobs mass closer to the high-service work. Thus, we can see that for New Arrivals the types of jobs that constitute service is broader than for BR/SO.[9] Unlike BR/SO, New Arrivals do not place a division

[9] This difference is also interesting given that in general BR/SO were much more charitable in their answers in the interview to the question of what constitutes service than

between high- and moderate-service that is as well-defined. Instead, they place moderate-service work further from low-service work and, thus, closer to high-service work.

I suggest that this emergent divergence in the ways that BR/SO and New Arrivals define service stems from their differential access to high-service work. BR/SO seem to support community discourses that place government work as the archetypal high-service work because not only do they have greater access to these types of jobs but also the maintenance of these service discourses safeguards their position in the community by limiting competition for these high-service jobs. On the other hand, New Arrivals' placement of moderate-service work closer to high-service positions, I offer, comes from their relatively diminished access to government work due to their lack of language skills and educational background, a topic I will address in more detail in the next chapter.

Overall, these trends demonstrate that Tibetan exile youth ascribe to the notion of serving the Tibetan community and generally agree with community discourses that government work best fits the idea of service. Yet, their differential educational backgrounds, language skills, and thus access to high-service employment impacts the location of the boundaries between these clusters of high-, moderate-, and low-service work and the robustness of these divisions. These diverging definitions of service as well as orientations to kyamkyam function to divide Tibetan exile youth into two groups: One (Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans) for whom kyamkyam is leisure and service is accessible; and the other who experiences kyamkyam as a lifestyle because of their lack of access to employment that is widely viewed as service.

In the following chapter, I explore how these variations in orientation to shapshu emerge out of the educational system in place in the Tibetan exile communities. The Tibetan education system in exile (India and Nepal) has developed into a significant network of schools tending to the needs of youth with varying migration trajectories. These differences in shapshu, kyamkyam, and educational backgrounds are not ends to themselves, though. Instead, they influence how these youth use written language in their everyday lives, written language that circulates in the community much like Dikyi's cigarette list in chapter 1. Through such circulation of written language influenced by differing social lives and experiences the divisions that currently exist in McLeod Ganj are reinforced, maintained and at times challenged.

New Arrivals. No New Arrivals said that any work is service, while several of the BR/SO interviewees expressed this sentiment.

CHAPTER FIVE

LEARNING TO SERVE AND TO ROAM

You could ask almost any Tibetan secondary student in Tibet or the diaspora where the writing system for Tibetan came from and they would tell you the story of King Songtsen Gampo and his seven ministers. While it is unclear if this story recounts actual events, it is the most well known account regarding the origins of the Tibetan writing system and as such is part of Tibetans' collective memory. Through its retelling to successive generations of Tibetan children, it has helped to shape ideologies of literacy by linking the writing system to Tibetan religion and the Tibetan nation-state.

In this version of the origination story, King Songtsen Gampo, the sixth century ruler of Tibet, is credited with having sent seven government ministers to India with the mission of bringing back a writing system that could be used to translate Buddhist texts into Tibetan. These ministers, however, met with many hardships while in India. Six of the ministers succumbed to illness or disease, leaving Thonmi Sambhota the sole minister to return to Tibet with the writing system they had developed from the Indian Devanagari script. So famous is the story of this perilous journey and successful return that a statue of Thonmi Sambhota today stands in the main courtyard at the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa. Outside the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in McLeod Ganj, there is a mural depicting him sitting cross-legged writing the Tibetan alphasyllabary[1] on parchment.

The story of the Tibetan script, King Songtsen Gampo, and Thonmi Sambhota, however, is more than just a tale of adventure and adversity. According to this widely known story, the King's desire for a writing system stemmed from the perceived need to translate the Indian Buddhist texts into the Tibetan language. While it is probably more accurate that the King planned to use writing for keeping bureaucratic records (Snellgrove and Richardson 1995) rather than the spreading of Buddhism, today he is credited only with the latter motivation. Nevertheless, the telling

[1] See Swank (2008) for a discussion of this terminology.

of this story establishes a connection between writing, religion and the Tibetan nation-state at the origins of Tibetan literacy.

These connections have continued through to the present. As Tsering Shakya (1999, 158) stated, throughout Tibetan history "Tibetans have viewed writing as sacred . . . [and] primarily associated with Buddhism." One of the main reasons for the persistence of this association is that King Songtsen Gampo was thought to be the incarnation of the patron deity of Tibet, Avalokitesvara, who afterward incarnated in the form of the Dalai Lamas starting from the seventeenth century. This historical continuity between the beginnings of Tibetan literacy and the present day has created an indexical relationship—"a linkage of speech [or here, writing] with social structure and cultural meaning" (Inoue 2006, 75)—between religion, the nation-state, and writing that has recontextualized (Ochs 1990) the past, creating a history in which literacy is, and was since its sixth century origins, intertwined with a Tibetan society that was neither under the rule of China or reconstituted in exile in India.

While this indexical relationship between Tibetan writing, religion, and a pre-1950s Tibetan nation-state has persisted on both sides of the Himalaya, it has undergone changes along differing paths. Yet in both communities (i.e. in exile and in Tibet) this indexical relationship is exploited through their respective educational institutions. In Tibetan exile schools, historical data on Tibet presented through the curriculum paint a picture of Tibet as something of a utopia, while in schools on the Tibetan plateau pre-1950s Tibet is framed as more of a dystopia.

In McLeod Ganj, Tibetan literacy, as part of a language, culture, and religion triad, is seen as a means of preserving a 'pure' Tibetan nation-state. It is, further, the particular responsibility of youth in exile to preserve their culture (including literacy) for a return to a free Tibet. According to Nawang Phuntsog (1998, 36), "Tibetan children in exile share a responsibility to play a vital role in the struggle to free Tibet: they are the dream-keepers of an independent nation." However, the stories and images of pre-1950s Tibet that are taught in the exile schools do not necessarily portray the realities of that era. Instead, "what is presented is a necessarily remembered or imagined Tibet" (Hess 2009, 56). An analogous process of remembering is present in the educational institutions in Chinese Tibet. Following the nationalist unrest in Tibet and pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen and across China in the late 1980s as well as the relatively liberal education policies of the early to mid-1980s, including teaching Tibetan students about Tibetan culture in their native language, education in Chinese Tibet shifted toward a curriculum emphasizing economic advancements achieved under Chinese rule. In particular, one

of the main aims of education in Tibet was to contrast economic and social problems of pre-1950s Tibet with the present day. The goal was to disparage Tibetan culture while simultaneously exalting the influence of the Chinese government (Bass 1998).

Youth in McLeod Ganj have been unevenly exposed to and influenced by these differing educational messages. To a degree, these divergences occur along the lines of migration trajectories and communities of practice. However, because Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans pattern similarly in their educational backgrounds as well as orientations to kyamkyam and shapshu, in the following section I discuss them as a single community. These youth were raised in exile and socialized to see themselves as responsible for the preservation of Tibetan culture in exile. New Arrivals, in comparison, attended schools in Chinese Tibet as well as at the Tibetan Transit School in India. Yet, some New Arrivals like Palden do have some commonalities with other exile youth in that they bring with them a renewed stress on Tibetan linguistic purity from their communities in Tibet. Between these divergent and at times overlapping educational and everyday experiences, New Arrivals heard at times conflicting messages. New Arrivals must then resolve these often-incompatible histories, hence the messages of cultural and linguistic preservation prevalent in exile educational discourses are not as ingrained in them as in Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans who heard such messages from a very young age.

These differing messages then inform divergent ways of being out of which emerge multiple ideas of shapshu or 'service.' Sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, extensively studied the influence of education on how individuals go about their everyday lives, especially after leaving school. According to Bourdieu (1991), the influence of these educational messages manifest themselves also as divergent 'life chances.' Bourdieu (1991, 231) goes on to refer to groups with similar life chances as 'classes on paper,' stating that these are "sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and submitted to similar types of conditioning, have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances." These 'similar types of conditioning' of which Bourdieu speaks include, in particular, the educational messages that children and young people receive.

Schools and Communities: Bourdieu's Allocation Effect

In the Tibetan exile communities, there are several different educational institutions each inculcating in students differing inclinations and thus

producing what is called the 'allocation effect' (Bourdieu 1984). This term refers to the notion that the type of educational institution to which one is assigned or allocated, not only introduces differences in education but also differences in everyday practices and community membership. Bourdieu (1977) uses the term 'habitus' to refer to the effect of one's lived experiences on how one goes about living in the world. The habitus is a set of dispositions that individuals learn, in part, as a result of this allocation effect. For Tibetan youth, the allocation effect relates to their everyday practices of dress, language use, work, leisure, and even their experiences of kyamkyam and shapshu. All become part of their habitus due significantly to the educational institution to which they were allocated.

Tibetan students in exile are allocated to different schools based on two criteria: (1) place of birth and (2) if born in Tibet, age of arrival in exile. The majority of my participants attended one of three schools: the Tibetan Transit School (TTS), the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV), and the TCV Suja.[2] In many ways, a student's allocation to one of these three institutions determines their membership in a given youth community of practice.

Because of the impact of an institution on youth community membership, it is important to make clear the relationship between these institutions and the three youth communities we've been discussing. The Tibetan Transit School, sometimes referred to as the Tibetan Rehabilitation School, teaches exclusively New Arrivals who arrived in India between the ages of eighteen and thirty. It is sometimes called the Rehabilitation School because in addition to teaching written and spoken Tibetan and English, basic math and computing skills, they also attempt to educate Tibetan youth on their history and culture from the exile perspective. This program is not accredited by the Indian Ministry of Education. Therefore, TTS graduates do not earn a high school diploma but merely gain skills that will help them to function in India. Unfortunately, few TTS graduates I spoke with felt they had in fact learned skills that would help them find a job in the exile communities or the Indian sector.

The Tibetan Children's Village or TCV is a more traditional school. In McLeod Ganj, there are two such schools: the Upper TCV and the Lower TCV. The former is located twenty minutes by car from McLeod

[2] There are several other Tibetan exile educational institutions. These include the Central Schools for Tibetans, the Homes Foundation, among others. The majority of my participants, however, attended these three schools. Thus, I limit my analysis to only these three.

Ganj. It houses approximately 2000 students, whose boarders are both Semi-Orphans and children from families in outlying Tibetan settlements. The Lower TCV is much smaller and tends to cater to the children of CTA employees. Significantly, these institutions are accredited by the Indian Ministry of Education. Successful students graduate with either a tenth grade or twelfth grade education. In the Indian education system, students who are not planning to attend university most often complete their education in the tenth grade. Only those who plan to go to university continue through the twelfth grade. The TCV caters mainly to Born Refugees and younger Semi-Orphans (under fourteen years old), though there are some Indian as well as foreign children enrolled. The TCVs are predominately residential schools with approximately 90% of students residing on campus.

The TCV Suja is a specialized TCV institution with an accelerated TCV curriculum. Youth allocated to the TCV Suja have arrived from Tibet between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. These students complete the primary curriculum in two years, after which they choose one of three tracks: continuation of the secondary TCV curriculum, a language intensive curriculum, or the handicraft/vocational curriculum. Youth who attend the TCV Suja are not easily assigned to either the Semi-Orphan or New Arrival communities. For example, Chödön, who we met in chapter 2 in the vignette entitled "Veg and Non-Veg," attended the TCV Suja having arrived in exile at the age of fourteen. Through her social networks and everyday practices, Chödön negotiates membership in the Semi-Orphan community more than the New Arrival community. But this is not the same for all TCV Suja students. There is significant variation, with most becoming marginal members of the Semi-Orphan community of practice.

Across these three educational institutions and youth communities, allocation to the TCV or TTS strongly influences the youth membership in either the Born Refugee or the New Arrival community of practice, respectively. The TCV Suja impacts this membership less strongly, though again many do become marginal members of the Semi-Orphan community. Bourdieu's allocation effect impacts community membership and life chances not merely because these students tend to spend more time with fellow students but also because these and other educational institutions, including education New Arrivals received in Tibet, socialize these youth, through both their explicit and implicit curricula, to experience and understand everyday practices, particularly kyamkyam and shapshu, differentially.

Educational Textbooks and Socialization

The TCV and TCV Suja schools both use the standard TCV curriculum, including textbooks. These textbooks for the primary grades (i.e. grades 1–5) are written in Tibetan and have been developed specifically for use in Tibetan exile schools. They form a major portion of the foundation of the CTA's Tibetanization Program, which has been in place since the mid-1980s throughout the primary grades. And as Bourdieu reminds us, quoting Georges Davy, primary schools are important institutes for socialization.

> [For] a *maître a parler* (teacher of speaking) who is thereby also a *maître a penser* (teacher of thinking): 'he [the primary schoolteacher], by virtue of his function, . . . Is already inclining them quite naturally to see and feel things in the same way; and he works to build the common consciousness of the nation.' (Bourdieu 1991, 49)

Given the importance of the primary schools' messages, it is important then to examine the textbooks used in these grades.

In Tibetan communities on both sides of the Himalaya, textbooks have been exploited for social and political ends. These Tibetan communities, of course, were not the first to exploit education's role in linguistic and cultural socialization. Debates concerning the content of textbooks have come to the fore now and again across the globe. For example, in 2001 the media worldwide reported the international controversy regarding a new series of Japanese history textbooks. Groups suggested that the new textbooks downplayed Japan's participation in certain activities, such as comfort women, during World War II. More recently in the United States, Hindu groups protested against the ways that their religion was explained and represented in history books in California public schools. These examples emphasize the potential for bias in what is taught in schools. After all, curricula are developed by individuals, who at the very least unknowingly incorporate their viewpoints and perspectives into the textbooks they write. Thus, although many students and parents perceive education as presenting unbiased 'facts,' this information is never completely neutral, but rather privileges one perspective over others.

The Japanese and California examples also demonstrate the centrality of textbooks to the education system and to these debates. However, what textbooks convey goes beyond the mere facts conveyed on their pages. "[Textbooks] signify—through their content *and* form—particular constructions of reality" (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991, 3; emphasis original). At the start of this chapter, I suggested that Tibetan writing and literacy indexes Tibetan religion and more importantly a 'pure' Tibetan

nation-state. In this indexical relationship, textbooks and schooling play an important role in teaching children about the uses and social meanings of literacy. As Bourdieu (1991, 149) reminds us, "[t]he code, in the sense of cipher, that governs written language . . . acquires the force of law in and through the education system."

Educating Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans

In the first approximately twenty-five years of their existence, the Tibetan exile schools used the textbooks and curriculum of other schools in India. These textbooks were in English and written for an Indian student body, with little or no mention of Tibetans or Tibetan history in their content. As the years in exile stretched into decades, Tibetan parents became concerned about what they perceived to be a decrease in their children's level of Tibetan literacy as well as their knowledge of Tibetan history and culture. In 1985, in an effort to counter this perceived threat to Tibetan language and culture, the Educational Development and Resource Center (EDRC) was founded by the CTA and housed just outside McLeod Ganj near the Upper TCV campus.

The EDRC's main aims were to change the medium of instruction for the primary grades from English to Tibetan, design a curriculum particular to the Tibetan exile community, create textbooks and supplementary materials in Tibetan, and begin training primary school teachers in this new curriculum (Pema 2005). Thus, the intent was not simply to replace the textbooks that were currently used in Tibetan language and literature classes, but specifically to create new textbooks and curricula for all primary grade subjects. This curriculum was named The Tibetanization Program with the stated aim of creating a "curriculum that effectively links modern education with an intimate understanding of Tibetan cultural heritage and identity" (TCV 1999, 7). In 1986, the first draft copies of these textbooks were in use in some of the TCVs, such as the Upper TCV near McLeod Ganj. By 1991, fourteen of these textbooks in various subject areas were printed and being used in classrooms. Many of the youth with whom I work were among the first students to use these new primary school textbooks as part of the Tibetanization of the exile education system.

The primary school textbooks in use at the TCV and TCV Suja schools are filled with pictures depicting stories about life on the Tibetan plateau before the Chinese invasion. They present life in historic Tibet as idyllic, and Tibet as an independent nation. Through these textbooks, students

learn not only the indexical relationship between Tibetan language and culture and a 'pure' pre-1950s Tibetan nation-state but also that exile in India preserves this idealized culture. Moreover, they also learn that it is their responsibility to carry on Tibetan language, culture, and religion in exile. Such messages tacitly teach students to maintain social boundaries between themselves and non-Tibetans, encouraging activities and practices (including shapshu) that support the exile community. In the following I examine three strategies present in these textbooks in use in McLeod Ganj: (1) establishing Tibet as independent from China; (2) vilification of the Chinese for their treatment of Tibetan people and land; and (3) highlighting of a specifically Tibetan material culture. Through these and other strategies, these textbooks help to establish in students a sense of duty toward the Tibetan exile community.

The first example comes from a first-grade science and social studies textbook and is entitled "Peoples and Countries." In this six-page lesson, Tibetan national identity is defined and then contrasted with people from other nations with which Tibetans have (or have had) frequent contact. For each country, a drawing of people from that country are depicted on the left-hand page with the following descriptions appearing on each facing page:

> *Tibet and Tibetans*
> Here there are many people.
> They are Tibet's people.
> Tibetans' country is Tibet.
> Tibet's people are called the Tibetan people.
> Tibetans' language is Tibetan.
> The *chuba* is the dress/clothing of Tibetans. (EDRC n.d., 39)
>
> *India and Indians*
> In this example, there are many people.
> They are Indians.
> Their country is India.
> Hindi is the language of India.
> India is big.
> Tibet is next to India. (41)
>
> *China and Chinese*
> In this example, these people are Chinese.
> The Chinese' language is Chinese.
> Their country is not Tibet.
> Their country is China.
> Tibet and China are different/separate.
> Tibet is the Tibetan's country. (43)

In each contrasting example, Tibet is located as a distinct and independent country (e.g. Tibet is next to India and Tibet and China are different/separate), not only through such oppositional statements as these but also through parallel sentences designating each group's name, country, and language. Through these pictures and text, Tibetan language is linked with geopolitical Tibet, while Chinese and Hindi are equated with particular phenotypes and geographic locations.

The accompanying drawings of residents of each country—in clothing that in most cases could be associated with country-specific apparel—also represent difference through dress. "[D]ress often indicates an aspect of identity, for both group exclusion and inclusion are made apparent through the processes of modifying and supplementing the body" (Eicher and Sumberg 1999, 298). The differences in dress between these three drawings serves to symbolize not only Tibetan difference and separation but also, in the case of the two of the three Chinese individuals who are depicted wearing soldiers' uniforms and with one carrying a firearm, these differences become politicized. By demonstrating how Tibetans are different from other groups, unifying aspects of Tibetan culture are foregrounded creating an idea of unity of identity among all Tibetans. Not only do these images in texts work to establish Tibet as an independent nation, they also simplify the linguistic and cultural diversity of India. By equating one language with one country, they do not leave space for a Tibetan speaking community within India's national borders, effectively erasing Tibetan exiles from incorporation into the Indian nation-state. In creating this unity in opposition to other nations and peoples, these textbooks normalize Tibetan social separation from Indians, not to mention Chinese, as well as the preference given to activities and practices that take place only within the boundaries of the Tibetan exile communities.

These notions of separateness and national independence are reinforced through a dearth of images and stories that deal with everyday life for Tibetans in exile in India. Therefore, the corresponding ubiquity of objects and experiences in these textbooks that are almost wholly foreign to Tibetan youth in exile throw into relief the images and stories that do touch on their everyday lives in India. One of the few stories that addresses life in India appears in a second-grade social studies textbook. The story is entitled "The Market" and has photographs, instead of the usual hand drawn illustrations, of the market area in McLeod Ganj. What is most significant about this story, however, is that it is not so much about Tibetans in India but instead it is about a little Tibetan girl and her Indian friend, Sita. Thus, it is important to note that when the everyday lived context of

exile Tibetans is evoked, it is often to highlight the otherness of their lives by examining their experiences in relation to the 'real' residents of India.

Furthermore, these materials often include stories that vilify and oversimplify the impact of the Chinese occupation in Tibet. This is not to dispute the dire impact that the Chinese occupation has had on Tibet and its people. However, these stories often depict activities, such as degradation of Tibet's delicate environment, as solely attributable to the Chinese. While it is true that activities such as mining on the Tibetan plateau, an activity directly attributable to the Chinese occupation, have had a significant impact on the plateau's flora and fauna, Tibetans in historic Tibet were not as conservation-minded as presented in these textbooks. The following story, of which we read an excerpt in chapter 1, is taken from the TCV magazine *Gang Jong* or *Land of the Snows* and is entitled "Save the Environment." The story and accompanying illustration fill two pages at the very center of the magazine. The text appears in a box in the middle of the pages with two yaks grazing on some grasslands just outside a pine forest on one side of the box and a pair of pandas peaking out from a dense bamboo forest to the right of the text. In addition, several magpies sit near a lake at the bottom of the page. At the page's top, there are snow capped mountains.

> By and large, Tibet has many beautiful animals. From among these my favorites are the yak and dri, panda bear, colorful magpie, and small black raven. The yaks and dris almost always stay on the grasslands and in the mountains, while the pandas stayed inside the bamboo forests. The small black raven lives around monasteries. And the colorful magpies live around villages where they bear good news to people. These living beings are of our Tibet, The Land of the Snows, and are rarely seen elsewhere. These days, though, the Chinese are destroying Tibet's environment. The panda bears have been moved out of their natural habitat, and some are being sold to foreign countries. In any case, regarding my four favorite animals, only they have grown up in our country The Land of the Snows together with the history of the Tibetan people. (Central Tibetan Administration 1997, 12–13)

This and other similar stories re-contextualize Tibetans' own impact on their delicate environment, attributing its degradation only to the Chinese presence. Such claims, though, are not uncommon. As Emily Yeh (2009, 104) points out, "claims of nature protection play a key role in contemporary political struggles over Tibet." In such discourses, Chinese claim that Tibetans did little to preserve the delicate ecological balance on the Tibetan plateau, while Tibetans, as demonstrated in the piece above, counter that the Chinese government has—contrary to generations of

Tibetans' efforts to maintain their environment—intervened to the point of causing large scale environmental degradation. On the Tibetan side, Huber (1997, 2001) offers that such claims do not come from the majority of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, but instead have emerged out of a small segment of exile Tibetans, many of whom are in McLeod Ganj. Such discourses function in part to collapse time and space differences, extending current Tibetan efforts at recycling and environmental protectionism back in time and across the Himalaya into Tibet. It is out of this small segment of exile Tibetans that many of the exile textbooks and related publications have come, providing this group of Tibetans with the ability to significantly influence how young Tibetan exiles view the Chinese occupiers as well as their place and responsibilities as exiles.

In addition to these written texts, textbook illustrations rely almost exclusively on Tibetan material culture, such as scenes and artifacts. The illustrations appearing in these books are most often hand drawings of specific cities in Tibet as well as traditional Tibetan houses and high altitude landscapes. There are also sketches of traditional Tibetan life, which include such objects and activities as manual butter churns for making butter tea, children wearing knee-high felt boots, and community picnics in open fields with yak grazing in the background. In math lessons, children often learn to do calculations relying upon pictures of Tibetan religious symbols and animals, usually yaks. Not only do many of these pictures depict items rarely used in Tibetan households today on either side of the Himalaya (e.g. manual butter churns, felt boots), through pictures, these books inculcate in students an understanding of Tibetans in exile as distinct and possessing a material culture that is unique and in need of preservation. Through these lessons students are subtly taught the importance of serving the Tibetan community. They are taught their language, culture, and religion are unique. Therefore, in order to preserve their language, culture, and religion for a return to a free Tibet, it is important to maintain and support the Tibetan exile economy.

These messages tacitly socialize children to a focus on the Tibetan exile communities. And yet, these textbooks rarely recognize the community's refugee status. Instead, they emphasize cultural preservation and imply social isolation. Thus, they subtly teach students that practices and activities that help maintain the community are most highly valued. These textbooks also contain more overt messages related to the exile community and service to it. While not as unequivocal in their reference as the phrase "Come to Learn, Go to Serve" over the TCV athletic field or the TCV motto

"Others Before Self" that were presented in chapter 4, they do highlight the relative social value various types of work garner in the local community. Of particular interest is a chapter entitled "People and Jobs" from the second grade social studies book.

"Peoples and Jobs" introduces several jobs common in McLeod Ganj (e.g. seamstress, teacher, garbage sweeper, barber). The first lesson in this chapter teaches students that different types of people do different jobs. It concludes with the sentence "If doing a good/useful job, you and everyone else will benefit very much." At the end of this essay there is a picture of a bird constructing a nest with the sentence "Animals work." Several pages later on the final content page before the chapter review is a lesson called "Good/Useful Jobs." I have translated this page in its entirety below:

> In general all jobs are good/useful.[3] However, we sometimes call some jobs good/useful and other jobs bad/useless.
> For example:
> A teacher's job is good.
> A garbage sweeper's job is good.
> A cook's job is good.
> Only jobs that injure/harm others, take a life, thieve, or deceive others are bad/useless.

This lesson seems to be attempting to offset the first lesson in which the phrase 'If doing a useful job' is used in that it implies that some jobs are useful and others are not. More subtly, though, I suggest that the presence of this lesson is intended to counter community discourses that categorize certain types of work as high-service and others as low-service, as we saw in the pile sort from the previous chapter. The use of syntactically parallel sentences equates typically high-service work (i.e. teacher) with low-service work (i.e. garbage sweeper, cook). In addition the picture of the bird with the sentence 'Animals work.' attempts to naturalize the activity of work. In particular, the use of the Tibetan word *semchen*, which ambiguously refers to sentient beings in its broader meaning, but simply animals in its narrower meaning, helps to make the notion of work more widely applicable.

The TCV textbooks that are used to educate Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans are permeated by ideological messages that attempt to imbue in students a simplified view of historic Tibet as an independent nation and Tibetans as 'Green.' These messages teach youth the importance of

[3] Tibetan: *yakpo.*

preserving Tibetan culture in exile and thus influence youth views of serving the Tibetan community, and for my purposes here, especially in terms of the relative value of various jobs. Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans are allocated to the schools based on their migration trajectories. In turn, the education they receive in the TCV curriculum informs the divergence in concepts of shapshu seen in the previous chapter. In the next section, we will see the socialization through education that New Arrivals experience both in Tibet and as refugees in India.

Educating New Arrivals in Tibet and Exile

Many New Arrivals are educated both in the Tibet (called the Tibet Autonomous Region or TAR in China)[4] and in exile. The messages they receive through these institutions are often conflictory. In China they are often taught that pre-1950s Tibet was an oppressive feudal state, and the Dalai Lama-led exile communities are attempting to divide what has always been a unified Chinese motherland. Once in exile, however these youths are often taught that pre-1950s Tibet was a utopic society where all lived in harmony with nature and each other. In this section, I examine recent trends in education in the TAR drawing from various sources and focusing on primary education. This discussion is followed by an overview of the Tibetan Transit School curriculum near McLeod Ganj, which educates many of the New Arrivals in McLeod.

Education in the TAR

With the Dalai Lama's exodus in 1959, the Chinese government fully took over education in Tibet. From that time, as Ellen Bangsbo (2004, 281) points out, "Tibetans in Tibet have [had] little influence on the content of the national school curriculum." Over the ensuing decades, education across China as well as in the TAR has oscillated between two competing perspectives on education.[5] On one hand, what is called the Quality Strategy supported by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping focuses resources

[4] The TAR or the Tibet Autonomous Region was established in 1965 by the Chinese government, covering what used to be called central Tibet. After 1949, other areas with a Tibetan population were incorporated into neighboring provinces (Bass 1998). Thus, the TAR is substantially smaller than historic Tibet.

[5] The majority of this section is drawn from Catriona Bass's (1998) book entitled *Education in Tibet*. Unless otherwise noted, this source is used throughout this section.

on the best students believing that their education would speed up economic advancement in China. Under this plan, the remaining majority of students receive more educational attention only after the country achieves greater economic development. On the other hand, the Quantity Strategy, developed by Mao Zedong, supports education for all students in the form of a predominantly ideological education shaping youths into socialist citizens. Over the decades, Chinese educational policy has seesawed between these two approaches. The Quality Strategy held sway in the 1950s through the mid-1960s and again in the 1980s, while the Quantity Strategy was employed from 1965 through 1978 during The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Changes in strategy were "often abrupt" (Bass 1998, 41) and reflected power struggles between each plan's proponents. Changes in plan, though, meant more than just a change of textbooks and curricula. There were drastic changes in funding, shifting between centrally funded and community funded, as well as the building of schools and creation of universities.

With Mao's death in 1976 and the subsequent declared failure of his Quantity Strategy, Deng Xiaoping came back into power and education shifted once again toward quality, a focus that continues more or less through to today. With this shift came a renewed focus on minority education (Upton 1999). The 1980s in the TAR saw a revival of Tibetan language education as well as the teaching of Tibetan cultural practices and history. From 1984, Tibetan was made the medium of education for all primary school levels in the TAR. However, the 1990s saw yet again another shift in educational policy in the TAR and across China.

After the 1987 unrest in the TAR and other pro-democracy movements across China, the Chinese government instituted Patriotic Education Campaigns aimed mainly at 'minority' populations in China. In the TAR, such campaigns took place in 1990, 1994, and 1997 and continuing into the 2000s. While these were aimed at all ages, "young people were particularly targeted and thus schools became the main fora for patriotic education" (Bass 1998, 55).

As part of this patriotic education, the Chinese government fabricated a threat to China by 'external hostile forces' of which the Dalai Lama—framed as Tibetan nationalism—became one of the most dangerous threats to Tibetans in Chinese Tibet. As this patriotic education became the primary goal of education in the TAR, the then proposed separate education for Tibetans suddenly became unpatriotic. For as Postiglione et al. (2007, 52) stated, "Tibetans who advocate the trial [of Tibetan language] programs . . . Risk of being pigeonholed as separatists." In

addition, while many Tibetans may have wanted Tibetan medium education, they were also aware that Chinese is the language of economic opportunity for their children (Tournadre 2003). In this shift toward patriotic education, Tibetan language, culture and religion came to be seen as backward (Gladney 1999; Hanson 1999).

This emphasis on patriotic education had a definite impact on school curricula, though it impacted urban and rural students differently. In urban areas in the TAR, patriotic education emphasized economic reform in the Chinese market system as impacting urban Tibetans positively. In rural areas, the focus was "on contrasting life in Tibet before 1950 with the TAR today, by using family archives, genealogical records, and village histories" (Bass 1998, 57). Since 1994, these programs have become integrated into the fabric of the schools from flying the flag to national anthem singing to patriotic performances.

The 2000s in the TAR saw an even greater emphasis being placed on patriotic education. A study of textbooks used in the Tibetan language curriculum in the TAR compared textbooks from the 1990s with the newest textbooks from 2000s. In this study Bass (2008) found, among other changes, that (1) the new textbooks placed a greater emphasis on Tibet as an essential part of China and (2) they present pre-1950s Tibet as a repressive regime. While she mentioned several other changes to the textbooks, here I focus on these two strategies because they attempt to instill political ideologies that are the inverse of those I found in the Tibetan exile textbooks while employing similar devices.

First, Bass suggests that these new textbooks attempt to inculcate in children a stronger sense of the inextricability of Tibet from China. As an example, she suggests that lessons that focus on locations in Tibet are placed later in the Tibetan language curriculum than in the 1990s Tibetan language series. She states that it isn't until the second half of the book used in the third year of the Tibetan language program that the first Tibetan location is mentioned. Moreover, a piece on Lhasa, Tibet's capital, does not appear until the end of the textbook used in the sixth year. However, Beijing, China's capital, is treated in textbooks in the program's second year. By introducing locations in China, she suggests these schools are endeavoring to teach students to think of themselves as Chinese citizens first, Tibetans second. In a second example, Bass suggests that these textbooks also present a world that present-day children in the TAR cannot relate to. She states that pre-1950s Tibet is represented in simplified terms in which being rich is evil and being poor is good. Children in the TAR did not experience life in such simplified terms. The very people who

are vilified in these textbooks are most often people and figures these children's parents teach them to revere.

These examples recall those I discussed in the previous section on the exile education textbooks. Similar to these Chinese textbooks used in the TAR, the diaspora textbooks presented few locations in India, focusing instead on life and material culture from pre-1950s Tibet. In fact, the quote from Bass's (2008, 47) article "there are few realistic stories of Tibetan children dealing with the disjunction and contradictions confronting contemporary Tibetan society" is just as applicable to the exile education system's textbooks as it is to those used in the TAR today. Thus, among those students who are able go to school in Tibet and later migrate into exile in India not only do they experience contradictory political messages through their textbooks but also may find it difficult to bridge the gap between school in their everyday lives.[6]

Education in Exile

New Arrivals who come to McLeod Ganj between the ages of eighteen and thirty are placed in the Tibetan Transit School (TTS) in Lower Dharamsala. As students at the TTS, they are also provided with a place to stay. Thus, this institution is both school and home. Moreover, as young people new to the exile communities, fellow students often become surrogate families. The education they receive at the TTS is very different from their education, if they received any, in the TAR. The TTS curriculum does not provide students with a formal education, though they do often learn about Tibetan history and culture through their Tibetan language courses. In an interview with the principal of the TTS in 2008, he informed me that the main aims of his school' s curriculum were to teach students English and Tibetan. In order to achieve these aims, the first six months of the TTS curriculum is an introduction to English and Tibetan. Students requiring more assistance with these languages enter Class I, while others move on to Class II. In Class II, students can take vocational classes for an additional two years in sewing or creating traditional Tibetan religious paintings called *tangka* as well as continuing with math, basic computer skills, Tibetan, and English.

The TTS program lasts about five years, though only half complete it. This education does not qualify students to go on to an Indian or foreign

[6] See Phuntsog (1998) for a discussion of the importance of incorporating real-life experiences of exile into Tibetan exile education.

university. The TTS credentials are accepted at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, which is a Tibetan University in Sarnath near Varanasi where students work toward a degree in Tibetan Studies. Few of the TTS students with whom I have spoken expressed an interest in attending this university and becoming Tibetan teachers. Most often, students will study for two years at the TTS, learning to speak English. They then move to McLeod Ganj to find employment while studying at one or more of the many free English schools staffed by foreign volunteer teachers.

TTS students report gaining few if any skills for obtaining employment in exile community or the Indian sector. Such accounts are corroborated by the CTA' s website: "Due to lack of the formal education [at the TTS], the students find it difficult to get job after the course" (Central Tibetan Administration 2006). While for many the TTS does not provide them with employable skills, some students are able to take the skills learned at the TTS and use them to earn a livelihood. For instance the wife of one of my participants learned to sew at the TTS and now runs her own tailoring business. Her business has become so successful that when I returned to visit them, they had rented an additional one-room apartment in their building using this space as her tailor shop. For the vast majority, however, the TTS does not prepare them substantially to compete with Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans for the limited number of jobs available in the exile communities or even in the broader Indian society.

For these youth who arrive in McLeod Ganj after the age of seventeen the education they receive is quite different from other newcomers just a few years younger. Through the TTS curriculum they learn about the importance of serving the Tibetan community. However, this same curriculum does not provide them access to the types of employment that are widely considered high-service jobs. Moreover, as we will see in the next section, the implicit curriculum of the TTS socializes these New Arrival youths to engage in kyamkyam as a lifestyle. In part, kyamkyam as a lifestyle is attributable to the lack of parental constraints on these youths' time. But I also suggest that these youth would not, if left to their own devices, 'naturally' roam about town. Instead, through interactions with more established New Arrivals they *learn* to engage in kyamkyam as a lifestyle.

Implicit Curriculum

In Bourdieu's (1984) discussion of educational institutions, he suggests that more than just classroom curricula are taught in schools. Each school

seems to have its own implicit curriculum that is taught both inside and outside the classroom. He offers that through association with their schoolmates, children and youth acquire hobbies, engage in particular types of recreation, and learn certain practices that make up an implicit curriculum. Some of these hobbies and pursuits come and go in a matter of months or years, while others are retained for decades despite an entire replacement of the student body. Practices such as wearing low-rise jeans, stopping off at a café for a cappuccino with friends, or roaming the main market can become so closely associated with being or having been a student at a particular school as to seem part of the entire package of learning and education. It is in this way that schools socialize students to engage in certain activities and to acquire certain tastes (Bourdieu 1984).

Kyamkyam is one aspect of this implicit curriculum, the orientation to which is shaped by the school to which one is allocated. In McLeod Ganj, youth who had attended the TCV and those from the Tibetan Transit School anchor two ends of the continuum discussed above on which orientations to kyamkyam range from leisure to lifestyle, respectively. Young people who are students at the local TCV have many more constraints on how they spend their time than Tibetan Transit School students. Classes at the TCV begin in the morning and continue through into the late afternoon. Small children are picked up by their parents but even older children who walk home without their mother or father are most often expected to be home relatively soon after classes finish. They may dawdle along the way, but it is my experience that for the most part they find their way home well before dinnertime. Even students who are boarders at the TCV have duties after class. Students living at the TCV help out with cooking, cleaning, assisting younger children with their homework, and the like. All of these expectations leave less time for TCV students to engage in kyamkyam. Thus, unlike Tibetan Transit School students, kyamkyam as a lifestyle has not become part of the implicit curriculum of these institutions.

At the Tibetan Transit School, classes are scheduled for about the same length of time as those at the TCV, though, during the summer, TTS classes start earlier leaving the students with more free time in the afternoons. While these students have domestic work to do, they also have greater freedom in choosing when and what will be done at home. It is not unusual in the afternoon to see groups of students from the Tibetan Transit School walking up to McLeod Ganj where they hang out in cafes with friends or just roam the market area, earning some the appellation of *kyamkyi* as seen in the previous chapter.

Kyamkyam as lifestyle, however, is not solely about relaxing and sharing a tea or coffee. I was told by more than one Transit School Student that for these youth, whose social networks have been disrupted by their migration into exile, kyamkyam serves to create and reinforce new network ties through which information about educational, social, and economic opportunities circulate. Because the Tibetan Transit School students' time is not constrained by parents or other members of an extended family and because of the benefits these young people gain from kyamkyam as lifestyle, it becomes part of the everyday practices of New Arrivals, while for Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans it is experienced overwhelmingly as leisure.

In sum, the varied demands on Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans as opposed to New Arrivals in terms of time spent in a classroom, domestic expectations, and parental oversight leave New Arrivals with more time to kyamkyam while they are students. In this way, kyamkyam becomes one of their everyday practices that is often not altered once they have completed their education. Because of the lack of access to high-service and often moderate-service work laid out in chapter 4, the unappealing aspects of doing low-service work in McLeod Ganj, and the previous years as a Tibetan Transit School student, these youth do not need to change their patterns of kyamkyam. Moreover, as they often use kyamkyam to their benefit, there is little inducement to change their practices. Thus, even after they have completed their studies, kyamkyam remains part of their lifestyle.

In this chapter, we have seen the importance of schools and textbooks in influencing social divisions among Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj. The ways in which students are allocated to the various exile schools creates a unity among Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans dividing them from New Arrivals not only in formal education and the life chances that education affords them, but also in how they practice and view kyamkyam more as leisure than lifestyle. In the chapter that follows, we will turn to how these youth have used the literacy skills they learned in these schools to further recreate these social divisions.

CHAPTER SIX

WRITING DIVISIONS

When I first arrived in McLeod Ganj, it seemed to me that young people could be found writing something more often than not. Young Tibetans were publishing their poetry in *Contact* (a local English language newsletter), scribbling down a grocery list, writing in a personal journal or composing a love letter. Among New Arrivals the prominence of kyamkyam and rootlessness across their writings was just as unmistakable as the dearth of such expressions in writings by Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans. Instead of the roaming and wandering that dominates New Arrivals' writings, the collections of writings given to me by Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans are characterized by work and service to the Tibetan community. There were emails to family members regarding the individual's current and past employment, writings from work, such as store inventories and receipts, and letters of application for employment.

Different experiences of migration, exile, and education have brought about this differing distribution of writings across these communities of Tibetan youth. Among Tibetan exiles, service to the Tibetan community is emphasized by parents, schools, and the exile government. For Born Refugees, the dominant community of youth, being able to serve the Tibetan community in the form of economic participation and work is often taken for granted. They most often have familial networks as well as a high school or university education to facilitate their search for appropriate employment. Among Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals, however, access to opportunities to serve are limited by their lack of familial networks in India as well as, in the case of New Arrivals, the perceived inadequate education they received in Chinese Tibet and India. For New Arrivals, then, kyamkyam becomes as much a lifestyle as a means of forging new social networks and finding possible work. For Semi-Orphans and Born Refugees, kyamkyam is an experience of leisure, limited not only by their possible employment but also by the generally shared perception among long-term Tibetan exiles that too much kyamkyam is contrary to the aims of many in the Tibetan exile community. Given these varying orientations to shapshu and kyamkyam, it is not surprising then, with the ubiquity of writing among Tibetan youth, that many youth would negotiate their

orientations to these notions and thus these three communities through their everyday writing practices. For not only do these writing practices shape youths' positionings but in turn, the discourses and practices of shapshu and kyamkyam shape what kinds of literacy is important and guide notions of what is appropriate to write about.

In chapter 3, I suggested that it is useful to look at the three groups of Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj as communities of practice. One characteristic of a community of practice is a shared repertoire of resources, linguistic or otherwise. Such resources often take the shape of in-group humor, the practice of passing notes in class, or the use of certain lexical items or pronunciations. In McLeod Ganj, discourses about shapshu and kyamkyam circulate across all youth and have differentially become incorporated into each community's shared repertoire of linguistic resources. Through the use of these written resources, youth not only claim membership in one or more community of practice but also contribute to the ongoing negotiation of linguistic and, more specifically, written resources that constitute their community's repertoire. Thus, the differing ways that the individuals in this chapter have chosen to (and not to) write about shapshu and kyamkyam is informed by their respective shared repertoire of linguistic resources that circulates among the community to which they belong. Furthermore, each of these writings is more than a mere reflection of these youth communities, the circulation of these writings (even if the audience is one's future self) reinforces, disputes, and re-creates not only a single youth community but may also cross into other communities as well, creating opportunities for the processes of slippage, drag, and change (see chapter 3).

In this chapter, we will look at the writings concerning shapshu and kyamkyam from members of each of the three youth communities of practice. Not all of the members of a single community know each other well, but through their regular engagement in one of more communities of practice, they have become socialized to draw from certain orientations in their everyday writings. I will begin this chapter by examining some writings by Born Refugees, who occupy the dominant position in local youth hierarchies. I then bring in the writings by Semi-Orphans followed by the most marginalized youth community of practice, New Arrivals. The chapter ends with a retrospective discussion of these writings as they relate to the processes of slippage, drag, and change introduced in chapter 3, for it is in the circulation of these writings that we can see social change as it emerges as well as falls short of being taken up.

'In Full Charge of the Account'

Among Tibetan exile youth in McLeod Ganj, Born Refugees make up the largest proportion of young people. Despite their large numbers, they are not often written about in studies of McLeod Ganj youth because they are more difficult to meet and get to know. The main reason for this is that in comparison to other youth, these young people have well-established social networks through both their extended residence in India as well as through their parents. Unlike New Arrivals and Semi-Orphans, who come into exile knowing few, if any, older Tibetans, these young people have benefited from the long-term associations of their parents.

In terms of education, the largest percentage of Born Refugee youth attends school through at least the tenth grade.[1] That is, 33% of Born Refugees (in comparison with 11% of those born in Tibet)[2] sit for and pass the exams at the end of their tenth grade year, with 22% of these going on for a college and/or post-graduate education (CTA 1998). Access to a formal education from primary school through university not only orients these Tibetan exile youth to 'proper' forms of shapshu, but also provides them with the cultural capital, in terms of educational credentials, to obtain the types of jobs that constitute high-service work in the exile communities. In addition, these youth have learned from parents and other elder Tibetans of the dangers of excessive kyamkyam, and since the everyday lives of many Born Refugees are occupied by work, their participation in kyamkyam is only as leisure.

In the remainder of this section, I will examine writings from Born Refugees who participated in my study. This Born Refugee corpus, comprised of all of the writings given to me by Born Refugee youth, exhibited significant consistency. The overriding theme in this corpus is that of work, which as we know from previous chapters is often thought of as service to the Tibetan community. Among Born Refugees, kyamkyam is in a complementary position to shapshu with only one participant writing about kyamkyam and doing so only tacitly. I offer that this pattern among Born Refugees of frequently writing about shapshu but rarely about kyamkyam

[1] In India, it is common for students to attend high school only through tenth grade. Students who attend through twelfth grade usually intend to go on for a post-secondary education.

[2] Because these numbers are based only on place of birth, Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals are rolled together in these figures. Thus, it is highly likely that the actual numbers for New Arrival education are lower than 11%.

emerges out of their socialization in exile to social and linguistic norms through both community and educational discourses.

Dikyi, who we met in chapter 1 and again in chapter 2, spends most of her days in the family store just above the family home. She recently completed her bachelor's at Delhi University and so was assigned the task of managing the family business. At twenty-four, she is self-possessed, warm and kind. Her store is something of a neighborhood center, with neighbors leaving a parcel for another to pickup, entrusting Dikyi with the key to their parked scooter in case it needs to be moved, or just stopping in for a bit of tea and conversation. In addition, Dikyi is something of a local scribe. Educated and easily accessible in her store, illiterate neighbors will sometimes ask her to write letters on their behalf in either Tibetan or English. She provides this service to her neighbors free of charge.

Dikyi's family is also frequently in and out of the store. Her mother sends the houseboy up with a thermos of hot water, following him with the herbal medicines Dikyi takes each morning. During lunch, her sister, Dechen, brings her knitting up or her uncle Sangye carries up his Buddhist texts so Dikyi can take a two-hour lunch and nap before beginning the afternoon shift that ends around 8:00 p.m.

In the store is also a telephone (before cell phones became commonplace) that serves Dikyi's home as well as the neighborhood. Dikyi's brother has recently moved to Canada and gotten married. When he calls, Dikyi is the family member he most often talks to and thus she is the source of family news. The involvement that Dikyi has with her work in the store as well as her connections with family members is typical of Born Refugees' everyday lives. Several of the writings that Dikyi gave me, such as the email below, dealt either with work or with family in some way.

> hi dear bro,
>
> its nice having a fast reply from you, yes its true that we had enlarged our grocery shop, now it became very nice and big . . . business is also going fine and good, regarding the account, yes i am the full incharge of the account, i made different files for each whole saler, now everything had become perfect, hope business will go fine, both Nordrön and Tsewang are very helpful for us, we three are staying togehter, i mean two people used to stay togheter since shop is big then need two people, afterall we all are working together very well . . . bro regarding your contributing money, first you much have enough money to use there, here its ok, its India, things wil be fine but there if no money then difficult, so right now no need to send it loooo, you need the money there looo[3]. . . .

[3] This is a Tibetan language discourse marker meaning well or ahhh.

> about the teaching record, ok I will inform bro Dawa about it again, this way you will get it soon through bro Dawa. ok?
>
> i am so happy to hear from you, really!!! Ok then i stop and do mail me if you have time, ok?
>
> take care and good luck...
>
> yours sis
>
> Dikyi
>
> now i am very fine looo, so be happy, ok? miss you brother!!! [English]

While this email circulated only between Dikyi and her brother, one of the thematic resources she draws upon is that of work. In particular, she emphasizes her agency in the expansion of their store. She states, 'i am the full incharge of the account, I made different files for each whole saler, now everything had become perfect...' By emphasizing her work at the store, she demonstrates that she is serving her family as well as her community through work. She is not engaged in kyamkyam, but rather working and so, doing shapshu. While her work would not be considered high-service work, it is still recognized as shapshu especially in conjunction with the community services (e.g. writing letters, watching vehicles, holding packages) she provides to those who live nearby. Moreover, in her email she states, 'now everything had become perfect, hope business will go fine, both Nordrön and Tsewang are very helpful for us, we three are staying togehter.' Nordrön and Tsewang are two of Dikyi's cousins, whose parents live in Tibet, so they are living with Dikyi's family and helping her out in the store. In the evoking of family into the email, she is reestablishing the importance of family in her everyday life, which as we will see in the following chapters is a distinctive characteristic of membership in the Born Refugee community of practice.

As I stated above, all of the Born Refugees who participated in my study included writings about service/work in their collections. Another Born Refugee, Rinchen, also wrote about work in an email but this time to another Born Refugee friend. In this email, Rinchen talked about being satisfied with his job as well as being busy:

> ...i am happy with my job and these days, i am busy with the tibetan new arrival coming here at trc [Tibetan Reception Center]. we are having dept of finance picnic on coming saturday near dolmaling, norbulingka. all the finance staffare coming and i will have a nice time then.... [English]

Rinchen works for the CTA's department of finance in an entry-level position. He was born in India, and had attended CTA schools before getting a position with the finance department. In this email, which he sent to a friend who was soon coming to McLeod Ganj to visit him, the ease

of his discussion of his job as well as writing about interactions with his co-workers outside the office allow him to negotiate his identity as a Born Refugee. For Rinchen, working for the government is not an aspiration but a part of his everyday reality.

Across many Born Refugees, work and service play prominent roles in their everyday writings. The importance placed on service to the Tibetan community is taught not only through the educational system but also reinforced by parents and other family members. Born Refugees' and Semi-Orphans' ideas about work and service are influenced by the rhetoric of the Tibetan exile schools and the discourses that have permeated the community throughout their lives, creating a context in which the evocation of work and service by Born Refugees in their everyday writing practices is the single characteristic that all Born Refugee participants in my study shared.

Not only do Born Refugees write *about* having work and doing service but they also submitted writings they had done *for* work, like notes from company meetings, copies of store inventories, and several articles a local journalist had written for a McLeod Ganj newspaper. Two individuals *only* gave me writings that they had composed at work, despite my having seen them write in other contexts. This prevalence of work and, thus, service is part of their negotiated resources from which these youth draw in their writings. In other words, it is because these youth are members of the Born Refugee community of practice that they included writings about and for work in their collections. But also through the circulation of these writings and their inclusion as appropriate for an anthropologist's research, that these youth are negotiating their place in this community of practice.

Importantly, however, few Born Refugees, unlike Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals, commented on their work and employment. The absence such meta-commentary on work or service creates this form of participation in the larger community as normalized and commonplace among these youth. Thus, through the submission of writings about and from work but a dearth of commentary on working, they place themselves as Born Refugees, as young people who have access to employment and education that other segments of youth do not usually enjoy.

Given the pervasiveness of work/shapshu in Born Refugees' writings, the almost total absence of kyamkyam in their collections is remarkable. Among the Born Refugees' writings, there were only a few writings that dealt with kyamkyam in any way. None of these youth used the word kyamkyam or any of its related terms (see New Arrival section below).

Instead, they warned against not being 'at home.' We learned about the importance in McLeod Ganj of the phrase 'at home' or in Tibetan '*nang la*' in Vignette 4-1 in chapter 4. In that vignette, we met Dondüp an elderly Tibetan man who advised me that staying *nang la* is preferable for youth. In chapter 4, we also read a quote from one Born Refugee youth, complimenting me on how I never went roaming about town but went right home every evening to my apartment. In the email just below, one Born Refugee youth, who was out of town with some friends, writes to her boyfriend asking him to stay 'at home' and not be 'out late.'

> i know today is holiday..i hope you are doing good..but you know i am alwys worried about you....dont drink, dont smoke...eat good food and stay at home. dont stay out late at night.
> i love you and miss you a lot.
> missing you
> Lhamo [English]

In this email, Lhamo implicitly evokes the idea of kyamkyam through its opposition to being 'at home.' She not only expresses her worry over her boyfriend going out and roaming around town, but also places herself and, to a lesser extent, her boyfriend as individuals who do not participate in or value such activities.

Through these and other everyday writings, Born Refugee youth living in McLeod Ganj are negotiating their membership in this youth community of practice. Yet more then just negotiating membership, these youth are also locating themselves in relation to community discourses of kyamkyam and shapshu that identify them as particular types of youth and distance them from others. It is not only Born Refugee youth who employ everyday writing in this manner, for in the next section we will examine writings by Semi-Orphans and see some of these patterns repeated. However, because of their diverging migration trajectories these patterns are not exactly the same.

'I Really Need Good Job'

Among Tibetan exile youth in McLeod Ganj, Semi-Orphans as a community are probably the most varied in their experiences of exile. Some have arrived in exile as young as five years old, while others came on their own while in their teens. All of these young people attend a TCV, studying from the same textbooks discussed in chapter 5. Across Semi-Orphans, significant variation still exists between youth raised in exile from small

children and those who attended the TCV Suja starting in their teens. For example, Tenzin is among the most typical for Semi-Orphans in McLeod Ganj, having been sent by her parents into into exile at the age of five. She was educated at the upper TCV and seems in many ways like many Born Refugees, except for her continued anxiety regarding work and finding her own place to live.

Another Semi-Orphan, Chödön, attended the TCV Suja only through the sixth grade, having left a bad family situation in Tibet and coming into exile at the age of fourteen. In some ways, she seems much like a New Arrival: she remembers Tibet clearly and in many of her writings expresses longing and nostalgia that are common in New Arrival writings.[4] Yet, she speaks Hindi and English very well and has many friends in the Born Refugee community. Lastly, Norbu, who arrived in exile at the age of eleven and lived with a distant relative, studied at various TCV schools, getting excellent marks and winning scholarships. These scholarships allowed him to earn both a bachelor's and master's in science degrees at an Indian university in Chennai. When I knew him, he was looking into PhD programs to further his studies. An earnest and intelligent young man, he told me he had followed the Dalai Lama's urging that more Tibetans become educated in the sciences. However, now he was not able to find work using his education in the Tibetan exile communities, leaving him frustrated and unemployed.

Thus, although the education of Semi-Orphans is similar to that of Born Refugees, their trajectories do diverge in terms of shapshu and kyamkyam. Like the Born Refugees' corpus, writings that dealt with shapshu in some way were present across the Semi-Orphans' corpus, though some of these writings took different forms than Born Refugees. Interestingly, kyamkyam is absent in any way in this corpus. I suggest that Semi-Orphans' unique position in the community places them outside both the age-based and frequently/duration-based kyamkyam discourses we read about in chapter 4. In the following section, I examine several writings, finding that Semi-Orphans have the education but not the social networks of Born Refugees. Therefore, they often have difficulty engaging in shapshu, and especially employment that is considered high-service. Yet I suggest that their position among youth as lacking elders' admonitions regarding kyamkyam, having access to some work that constrains their schedules, and

[4] See Swank (2011) for a discussion of New Arrival writings and expressions of nostalgia, longing, and disillusionment.

being steeped in discourses regarding kyamkyam results in a perspective among Semi-Orphans that kyamkyam is simply not seen as important enough to comment upon. In sum, through their writings Semi-Orphans negotiate membership in this community predominantly through writings of and about work/service but not through writings about kyamkyam.

Similar to the Born Refugees discussed above, all of the Semi-Orphans included writings that either talked about work or were work-related (e.g. store inventory). Among Semi-Orphans, however, work writings commonly include a letter written to a company or school in application for employment. Among Semi-Orphans, who have no family on whom they can rely, securing paid work is often their foremost worry and concern. Service among Tibetan youth has expanded to include economic participation more broadly. Yet for Semi-Orphans access to such opportunities to serve is often more challenging than for Born Refugees, who can rely upon their parents' ties and financial support to help them find a suitable job and gain the requisite education. The concern Semi-Orphans exhibit about finding and maintaining employment can be seen in the explicit references that Semi-Orphans make about work, a practice in which Born Refugees did not engage in their writings. In one letter, Tenzin writes to a Tibetan friend. In this letter, she talks about three past and present jobs, including her salary as well as the hours she worked. Talk about work comprises about one-fourth (two paragraphs) of the letter. It is clear that Tenzin and her friend have previously discussed work as she writes regarding employment her friend was seeking, 'Anyway, I hope you got a positive response regarding your Job Application at Dehra Dun School.'

Another Semi-Orphan, wrote in her personal journal about the stress she was feeling about finding paid employment:

> ... After much thought I realized it is the tension of not getting the job that has drawn to me to think all the strange imagination. After sometime I console myself that I need to have some patience if I really need a good job. [English]

Such meta-commentary on work and jobs is common among Semi-Orphans. In fact, the Semi-Orphan corpus was unique in the presence of letters written in application for employment. None of the other youth communities included such writings. Moreover, several of these writings equate work with service. In the excerpt below, we see in Tenzin's letter of application she equates employment as a receptionist at a Tibetan exile school with successfully serving the Tibetan community.

> . . . With respect and humble request, I would like to draw you attention to this application.
>
> I am ex. Student of upper. TC.V. School and completed 2 yrs. diploma course in Secretarial Practice from S.O.S. T.C.V. for Tibetans, D[ehra] Dun. I had cleared up my course with excellent result and I am looking for suitable job.
>
> For more than one year I've worked at one small café in Mcleod Ganj as a counter.[5] It's family's small business and I don't feel anything new to learn for myself and nothing I can contribute to any of my society. I've always wished to work at some Institute where I can serve my best for general people. Therefore, I am submitting this application for the post of Office Assistant/Front Desk or anything which suits me according to my capability . . . [English]

In this letter, Tenzin states that she would like to 'contribute' specifically to 'my society,' by which she means the Tibetan exile community. She also specifically uses the word 'serve' here, stating that she would like to serve the 'general people' (i.e. Tibetan exile community). Tenzin expresses a similar desire to serve the Tibetan community in an e-mail to a foreign friend:

> So these days i am working at one guest house at mcleod ganj, dharamsala, h.p. i am receiving Rs.2000/-per month. but still i am looking for some better job where i can serve my society and also better for my future. i mean some kind of government job. hope u will pray for me. [English]

Like many youth I interviewed, Tenzin equates high-service work with working for the CTA. Such expressions of aspirations to serve the Tibetan community are common among Semi-Orphans. Norbu, who I mentioned above, also told me he was looking for an opportunity to serve the Tibetan community using his science education. Because he could not find employment using his skills, he hoped a PhD would open some opportunities for him. Another Semi-Orphan, Yangkyi also spoke to me about wanting to serve the Tibetan community. She had worked in an Indian elementary school for two years in southern India. With her collection of writings, she also gave me her letter of application to a Tibetan Children's Village school. In this letter she said that she had been 'taken care of by' the school, which has 'been the world' to her. She said that her teachers had been an inspiration to her, so she wanted to become a teacher in order to help other Semi-Orphans.

[5] Here Tenzin Dolma is referring to her work as a cashier at a local restaurant.

Among the Born Refugees, none of the youth included letters of application in their collections. I submit that the presence of multiple letters of application from Semi-Orphans is indicative of the pressure to be continually employed and the lack of connection to an older generation through which they could find employment contacts and fund their continued education. Yangkyi, in the letter of application mentioned immediately above, wrote about the financial barriers to furthering her education in order to move out of her teaching job at an Indian school and into a position at a TCV. Unable to get the necessary Bachelor's of Education degree preferred by the TCVs, but holding an MA in English she wrote, '... I have two years of experiences in the school. With a hope to get in TCV I have applied my application but couldn't get because of Bachelor's of Education [problem].' For Yangkyi, getting a teaching position at a TCV was so important to her that she had left her job in Bangalore and was living with a Semi-Orphan friend in McLeod, where she had been teaching English as a volunteer. Soon after I met her, she gained employment as an English teacher at a TCV in a small Tibetan settlement. The last time we met she was busy having chubas[6] made and finalizing travel arrangements, and she was clearly happy at finally being able to really serve the Tibetan community.

Semi-Orphans are socialized throughout their lives as both residents and students at the Tibetan exile schools. The messages from school are reinforced through the ubiquity of shapshu in community discourses that frame service to the Tibetan exile community as the most valued form of employment. In this way, writing about service, and in particular through letters of application, shapshu becomes part of the negotiated literacy resources Semi-Orphans draw from to negotiate their membership in this community of practice. Kyamkyam, however, was noticeably absent from the Semi-Orphans corpus. I suggest this is due to their unusual social position in the community. As youth having been raised in exile, they are not the intended audience of community concerns about kyamkyam that are framed in terms of frequency/duration of engagement in kyamkyam, that is kyamkyam as lifestyle or leisure. Such worries, instead, are directed at New Arrivals. In addition, because there are no elder Tibetans at home admonishing them about kyamkyam, Semi-Orphans are also not the target of advice with regard to the negative impact of kyamkyam on

[6] The name for Tibetan clothing that was commonly worn in historic Tibet. It is still worn today, though among younger Tibetans, usually only to work or on holidays.

their reputation. Therefore, because Semi-Orphans are to a greater degree outside either of these discourses related to the dangers of kyamkyam, this notion has not become so salient among them as to warrant mention in their everyday writings. In sum, Semi-Orphans create writings for and about work, in particular, letters in application for often high-service employment. However, with regard to kyamkyam, this notion is noticeable in its absence from their corpus and as such is attributable to their placement outside kyamkyam discourses in McLeod Ganj.

'My Roaming Spirit'

Across the Born Refugee and Semi-Orphan corpora writings concerning shapshu and kyamkyam exhibited significant overlap. In comparison, the New Arrival corpus differs from these corpora in both distribution and content. In terms of distribution, there are few writings for and/or about work or service but writings with respect to kyamkyam are not uncommon, the inverse of the pattern exhibited across the writings by members of the Born Refugee and Semi-Orphan communities. Moreover, the content of these writings also differed from these two communities. There were expressions about worries regarding the lack of good paying work as well as a seeming internalization of themselves as ones who roam.

In my experience, the lack of writings on work or shapshu and the frequent mention of kyamkyam mirrors their everyday experiences of exile. New Arrivals are more likely to be unemployed than other youth, and they do tend to engage in kyamkyam more frequently and for longer durations. As discussed earlier, this roaming about town is not all about meeting foreigners who might sponsor them, as some community members might suggest. It is also about finding out about work opportunities and establishing friendships as new refugees in India. Despite the usefulness of kyamkyam to New Arrivals, they are very aware that too much kyamkyam is looked down upon in the community. This awareness comes out in their everyday writings many of which are pervaded by feelings of an unease coming out of their not being substantially linked to either exile or the Tibet they left behind.

In terms of writings about service/shapshu, the New Arrival corpus is quite unlike the Born Refugee and Semi-Orphan corpora. Only two New Arrivals included writings about and/or from work in their collections. This relative paucity of writings about and/or from work cannot be attributed to New Arrivals' lack of employment, for all but one of my New

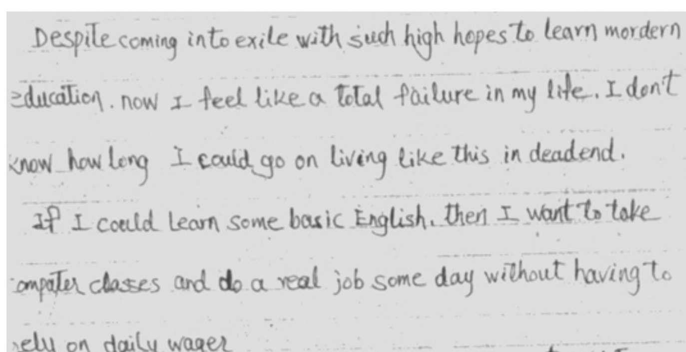

Despite coming into exile with such high hopes to learn mordern
ducation. now I feel like a total failure in my life. I don't
now how long I could go on living like this in deadend.
If I could learn some basic English. then I want to take
ompuler classes and do a real job some day without having to
ely on daily wager

Figure 6-1: A Daily Wager

> Despite coming into exile with such high hopes to learn modern education now I feel like a total failure in my life. I don't know how long I could go on living like this in deadend. If I could learn some basic English. then I want to take computer classes and do a real job some day without having to rely on daily wager.

Arrival participants were employed to some degree during their participation in my project. Among the two New Arrivals who did include writings from work, one was an article written for a local newspaper at which she was a reporter and the other is an entry from one young man's personal journal (Figure 6-1).

In this entry from his personal journal, Tenzin traces his experience of exile. He writes at the start of the 'high hopes' he had for getting an education in exile, an education that would have allowed him to get a 'real job' someday, instead of the hourly wage work he was currently doing. However, his financial situation in McLeod Ganj has precluded him from continuing his studies, leaving him to 'feel like a total failure.'

In this piece, Tenzin juxtaposes a 'real job' with hourly/daily wage work. In turn, he equates his 'daily wager' with failure. Through these juxtapositions and equivalences, he seems to be conveying that only salaried work would allow him to escape his 'deadend' life. In McLeod Ganj, however most employment opportunities are not salaried, though workers are often not paid a living wage. I suggest that Tenzin's juxtaposition between a 'real job' and 'daily wager' is more about higher pay as well as higher service/shapshu.

In our conversations, Tenzin expressed his aim to obtain employment with the CTA. However, his English was not quite good enough to pass the

required exam. Moreover, he and his wife supported themselves and two small children on what they made as cooks at a local restaurant where they worked long hours. Tenzin had little time to study English and so had little chance to qualify for a position with the CTA, which would have improved his salary greatly and allowed him to serve the Tibetan community. Therefore, I offer that at least for Tenzin salaried work is a gloss for high-service work. In this journal entry, Tenzin is highlighting his integration of community discourses related to shapshu into what counts as a successful life.

In sum, with the exception of the one New Arrival journalist, the only other mention of work in the New Arrival corpus is a negative metacommentary on the difficulties of finding high-service employment. In comparison to the presence of writings for and/or about work in *every* collection given to me by Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, the New Arrival corpus is distinctive for its scarcity of such writings. This distinction, albeit its inverse, is also present in terms of kyamkyam.

Analogous to Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, among New Arrivals shapshu and kyamkyam are in something of a complementary distribution. However, this complementary distribution is inverted from the pattern that we saw among Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans. In the New Arrival corpus of writings, the presence of kyamkyam and its related words is not unusual. Moreover, New Arrivals' usages of kyamkyam are often self-referential. I argue that this self-referentiality demonstrates that community discourses related to kyamkyam have been for some incorporated into their identities as New Arrivals. This assertion was supported in interviews with New Arrivals. In response to the question "Who likes to kyamkyam?" Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans frequently evoked the frequency/duration constraints discussed earlier that frame what constitutes 'good' kyamkyam. For example, one Born Refugee respondent stated, "If people always going kyamkyam is not good." Yet, among New Arrivals, only one respondent, who is something of an outlier in my sample, mentioned this frequency/duration parameter. This lack of comments regarding the frequency/duration constraints that are commonly spoken of in McLeod Ganj shows these youths' understanding that they are associated with 'bad' kyamkyam. Thus, they avoid bringing into the conversation these parameters that community members associate with them. In the writings that we examine below we will see that kyamkyam as well as the noun kyambo that is derived from kyamkyam are not rare among New Arrival writings. While kyamkyam is something of a central idea in New

Arrivals' experience of exile, I will also discuss a related device through which they negotiate an identity that is seemingly unmoored from Tibetan communities on the Tibetan plateau and in India.

The next example in this section comes from a letter one young man named Tenzin wrote to his family back Tibet. I have translated the greeting and one short portion of the letter below.

> A letter from a roamer in a distant place, [Tenzin Thopten]:
> . . . Regarding my ill father, I in a distant place who am sad with a roamer's longing, did not tell him [of my feelings]. [Tibetan]

In particular, I would like to point you to the use of the word 'roamer' or *kyambo* in Tibetan. As a reminder, kyambo in the form of the verb kyamkyam 'to roam about' is prevalent in community discourses regarding Tibetan youth and especially New Arrivals. It is most often placed in opposition to *nang la* or 'at home,' as most elders and youth raised in exile think that New Arrivals spend too much time roaming about town. It is more the case that this practice is due to their marginalization in the community and the difficulties they have finding work, these youth are simply left with little to do than roam about.

Tenzin Thopten is not alone in his use of the word kyambo. Palden, a participant who provided me with over two hundred original poems, also used this word. In one instance, he referred to a young woman as an 'unclaimed roamer,' while in another he used it in self-reference as shown below in an excerpt from a poem:

> my roaming spirit you mirror,
> Coming and going from all directions. [Tibetan]

These and other uses of kyamkyam and kyambo in some ways speak for the silence around the frequency/duration constraints found in interviews with New Arrivals. This use of kyambo re-creates and reinforces these youths' lack of footing in and integration into the exile communities. Constructing a view of their world in which they are merely roaming through exile, unconnected to the people and places in this more than fifty-year-old exile community of McLeod Ganj.

In collaboration with kyamkyam and kyambo, the word *satha* or 'distant place' is often brought into these writings. This word appears twice in the excerpts above from Tenzin's letter to his family in Tibet. He uses the phrases 'a roamer in a distant place' and 'I in a distant place who is sad with the roamer's longing.' Furthermore, Palden also uses *satha* in a poem writing, 'From a distant place my own thoughts were sad.' These uses of *satha* are examples of what has been called deixis.

Deixis is a term used in linguistic anthropology to refer to a class of words whose referential meaning is tied to the context in which it was uttered/written. For example, the deictic term 'here' can only be understood in relation to the context of its utterance. If I say while sitting at my desk in my office, 'Here is a pen' and if you say, 'Here is a pen' while you are sitting elsewhere, each of these utterances of the word *here* refers to a different location, a place that is near each speaker. Similarly, the word *satha* can refer to different specific locales dependent upon their distance from the context of utterance. That is to say, what constitutes a 'distant place' for me sitting in Las Vegas, may be very different from what can be regarded as a 'distant place' if you are sitting in New York City.

According to Hanks (1992, 61), "deictic reference organizes the field of interaction into a foreground upon a background." In other words, *satha* most commonly highlights the location of a certain faraway site (foreground) against the location of the speaker (background). In referring to this foreground-background relationship, Hanks draws from the Figure-Ground[7] terminology used in linguistics. Yet, as Hanks outlines, this bifurcation of the utterance context into a figure and a ground is not static or preset. Instead, it can emerge out of the interaction or, in this case, reading of the written form. In comparison, in the uses of *satha* above, the presupposed figure-ground distinction becomes *re-oriented* and *inverted.* Specifically, by referring to themselves as 'faraway' they position themselves as the figure and Tibet as the ground.

Such an inversion of the canonical figure-ground relation that is attributable to the uses *satha* above accomplishes two tasks: (1) establishes Tibet as the salient frame from which action occurs, (2) locates the speaker/author's (geographic) position as outside this frame of reference. In the context of a refugee and, thus, migrated individual, this inversion destabilizes the fixity of the figure's location by the placing him not only outside of his home frame of reference (i.e. Tibet), but also *not placing him* explicitly within any other salient ground. Thereby, this use of *satha* reinforces and collaborates with the notion of kyamkyam and the related kyambo to place New Arrival youth as roamers unmoored from both Chinese Tibet and the Tibetan diaspora.

Looking across these writings by New Arrivals, we see a very different distribution. There are very few writings on or from work/shapshu. One New Arrival submitted one piece of writing he had done for work. Another New Arrival, Tenzin, gave me a personal journal entry in which he

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7 See Talmy (1978).

talked about exclusion from high service work. However, there were more writings in this corpus that have to do with kyamkyam and related notions. Through these writings, New Arrival youth are negotiating an identity on the peripheries of the youth community in McLeod Ganj. In many ways, New Arrivals' repertoire of resources is the reverse of that of Born Refugees, and only overlaps with that of Semi-Orphans in anxiety regarding work/shapshu. From these writings, it seems that these New Arrival youth have integrated into their identities a sense of being unmoored in exile. This rootlessness emerges in part because these youth are relatively recent arrivals from Tibet, but is also due to their continued marginalization by long-term exiles in McLeod Ganj.

Slippage, Drag, and Change in Shapshu and Kyamkyam

Across these three communities, Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans share similar orientations to work/shapshu, while anxieties about work are shared across Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals. At the same time, New Arrivals are negotiating tenuous ties to exile. These writings, however, circulate not just between the sender and receiver but can also move among older and younger Tibetans, across youth communities, and the like. For instance, e-mail, like those discussed from two Born Refugees above, are often sent to and from friends and family. These are sometimes read aloud to others and other times forwarded on. Semi-Orphans often help each other write their letters of application, and New Arrivals often share their poetry and other writings. These youth will write letters to the editor of certain magazines or publish their stories or poems in local newsletters and newspapers.

It is in these contexts of circulation that opportunities for social change are brought about. As we know, social change does not occur all at the same pace. Instead, there are slippages, drags, but also changes. In chapter 3, I discussed these differing rates of social change. Slippage refers to social or linguistic differences within a context that go unnoticed or are ignored by the individuals involved. Drag occurs when differences in an interaction are noticed, but the resulting shifts and changes occur over an extended period of time. In the case of drag, the social or linguistic mismatch must recur in order for some sort of transformation to eventually take place. And lastly, change accounts for instances in which mismatches are recognized and transformation occurs rather quickly (a la Sahlins' framework). In this chapter, we saw occurrences of each of these paces of social change.

First, in the e-mail sent by Lhamo, a Born Refugee, to her boyfriend about staying 'at home' and not going 'out late,' there is a slippage. This e-mail participates in community discourses regarding the dangers of kyamkyam. However, these messages are largely ignored by many youth. They may limit the frequency or duration in which they engage in kyamkyam, but they do not give it up wholly. Moreover, in this specific case, this young man rarely heeded such advice from Lhamo. He was often out late, drinking, and having fun with his friends, especially when Lhamo was away.

An example of drag can be seen in the letters of application written by Semi-Orphans. These attempts to find work (common in everyday conversations as well as these writings) and their immediate need for work after graduating from the TCV has not affected a change in how the community understands these youth. In interviews with McLeod Ganj youth, answers to a question meant to get at how youth cope with moving into adulthood without family support rarely addressed the difficulties of this transition in the face of a lack of family financial support. Instead, youth commonly said that this process would teach youth without families "to stand on their own feet." Thus, the focus was on successful youth but only once they have become successful. This lack of widespread awareness of Semi-Orphans' difficulties as they transition from being a TCV student can also be seen in the lack of TCV or CTA programs that aid them in when they graduate from the TCV.

And lastly, change can be seen in the New Arrivals' incorporation of diaspora specific notions of shapshu and kyamkyam. In Tenzin's equation of 'daily wager' with failure, we can see his integration of a job hierarchy based on shapshu. Additionally, New Arrivals' uses of the words kyambo and *satha* highlight their incorporation of community notions of roaming and exclusion in their sense of self. I suggest that these are changes for these New Arrival youth because several of these youth wrote and spoke to me about their excitement, while they were still in Tibet, at joining the exile community in India. However, they also mentioned their disappointment with their relations (or lack thereof) with other long-term exiles after being in India for a short time.

These writings in their circulation present audiences with new (or reinforce old) ideas and ways of being. Not all are taken up at the same rate and some are not taken up at all. Social change, though, is at times a long-term process. It is, therefore, crucial to pay attention to the social contexts of these writings over sometimes years. For while some change occurs quickly as Sahlins outlined, other social changes take much longer.

PART THREE

YOU CAN LIVE WITHOUT A BROTHER, BUT NOT WITHOUT A FRIEND

CHAPTER SEVEN

FAMILIES IN EXILE AND ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS

In anthropology, Tibetans have remained rather famous for their familial structure. In particular, the practice of fraternal polyandry has been noted by anthropologists mainly because of its scarcity worldwide. Fraternal polyandry is the practice of brothers marrying one wife. According to Goldstein (1987), in pre-1950s Tibet, this type of marriage and family was considered exemplary across many classes or strata. He goes on to state that especially among landholders and laborers fraternal polyandry was an advantageous form of marriage. It functioned to keep familial land united that would otherwise be split among male children and their new wives.

One outcome of polyandry in historic Tibet was an 'excess' of daughters. It was thought unlucky and difficult to allow single daughters to remain in the household after her brothers had married. Thus, there were several strategies for dealing with these 'excess' daughters. Some became nuns, others worked for another family as a servant, and still others were set up in independent houses on the family land. These unmarried women sometimes had children outside wedlock, but such pregnancies were not generally stigmatized (Goldstein 1987).

Not all marriages across the Tibetan plateau were polyandrous during this period. There were also practices of monogamy and polygamy. Charlene Makley (2002), in her study on marriage and sexuality, stated that in Labrang, a town northeast of Lhasa in what is today called Gansu province, monogamous marriages were preferred. While several forms of marriage were practiced across Tibet, families generally shared several characteristics. Most often families consisted of multigenerational households with the younger generation providing care to their elderly parents. Marriages were most often arranged by the bride and groom's parents with varying levels of involvement from the young man and woman. In addition, in cases of marital discord, divorces were carried out quite easily. For example, in a polyandrous household if one brother became discontented, he could leave and start his own household. However, the children and the familial wealth would stay behind.

Yet the foremost aspect that was constant across historic Tibet was that the family was "the main social and property-holding unit" (Makley 2002, 585), a trend that we will see continues today both in Tibet and in exile.

For apart from husbands going away for long periods on trade excursions and a family sending daughters to husbands' homes in marriage, family was the central unit in historic Tibet. As Dawa Norbu wrote in his biography about living in pre-1950s and Chinese occupied Tibet, "to us separation from our family was like death itself" (Norbu 1987, 134). However, in the sections that follow in which I discuss the family in both present-day Tibet and in exile such sentiments regarding familial separation dissolve. In fact, we will see that, particularly in exile, family and their location organize these three youth communities into divergent groups. Unlike the previous discussions of shapshu and kyamkyam, there is little overlap between communities. But first I discuss how families have both changed and remain the same in present-day Tibet.

Urban/Rural: Divergent Family Structures in Tibet Today

Since the start of the Chinese occupation over sixty years ago, social changes in Tibet have been far-reaching. This was particularly so during the Cultural Revolution that held sway in Tibet into the 1970s. In this section, I discuss some of the changes in marriage and family in both urban and rural Tibet. Drawing upon research by anthropologists and researchers working on the Tibetan plateau, I briefly sketch some of these practices across the urban/rural divide to describe experiences of family that may have been part of the lives of New Arrivals before coming into exile.

In the first decades after the Chinese government took over in Tibet, the typical family structure was upended by collectivization and other policies. Subsequently, with decollectivization in the early 1980s, many of the family structures from pre-1950s Tibet reemerged, some with some altered aspects (Childs et al. 2011). As is often the case in Tibet, there are significant differences in marriage and family structures across the urban/rural divide. Urban areas have seen a trend toward love marriage and a breakdown of caste/class endogamy, while in some rural areas there has been a resurgence of polyandry but with unexpected familial outcomes. In urban settings, like Lhasa, young people have begun to seek out their own marriage partners. Yet there is a limitation on the choices young people can make in terms of their future spouse. "Although most marriages in Lhasa today are said by Tibetans to be based on mutual affection, the couple does not necessarily have the final decision" (Fjeld 2005, 85). Young people must still have their marriage partners approved by their

parents. Yet even in urban areas there is an emphasis on marrying endogamously. The scope of this endogamy, though, has changed. Today it is more important to marry within one's own ethnic group (i.e. Tibetans) than to restrict marriage to one's strata or caste. This relatively recent liberalization in marriage preferences has not transferred to more rural areas where intermarriage with lower classes/castes can bring about social alienation (Fjeld 2005).

In addition to the continued emphasis on endogamous marriage, some rural areas have also seen a resurgence in old marriage practices, and others a continuation of monogamous marriages. For instance, Makley (2002) demonstrated the continued preference for monogamous marriage in Labrang. In Shigatse Prefecture, Childs et al. (2011) reported a marked resurgence in polyandry across three small towns. In fact, this article suggests that in these areas the family structure is in the midst of a shift. Excess daughters, a result of this rise in polyandrous marriages, have become a source of cash income for their aging parents. In two towns, parents either set up their daughters as small business owners in a nearby market town or send them to Shigatse for an education that would allow them to find steady work with a regular salary. These daughters are then able to help financially support their parents. In one of these towns, parents expressed a preference for a daughter who specifically can go outside the family for paid work rather than send them as a bride to another family to form a polyandrous household. These daughters bring not only economic gain, but are able to care for their parents when they become elderly.

While there appear to be shifts and continuities in family structure in different parts of Tibet, there are important aspects that generally remain across the plateau. The most consequential of these aspects is that family continues to endure as the "basic unit" (Samuel 1993, 128) in Tibetan society. Within this basic unit, the norm also tends toward households with extended families and ethnic endogamy. A similar situation holds for households in McLeod Ganj. Some aspects have changed but family continues to be central in society.

Families Near, Far, and Absent: Migration and Separation in Exile

As in other cases of migrated communities around the world, movement often separates families. Some choose to remain in the home country, while others are too old or too young to migrate. However, even though family in the Tibetan diaspora has been reconfigured, this reorganization

has not been as drastic as one might think. For even in historic Tibet, tradesmen would often be away for months at a time. In fact, the ubiquity of trade in historic Tibet is one of the reasons polyandry was so effective (Childs et al. 2011).

In exile, familial separations have become quite common. Many McLeod Ganj residents engage in what is widely called 'winter business.' This often refers to the selling of Indian made sweaters in markets in South India during the winter. Such business often takes one or more family members away for several months.[1] In addition to such temporary business travel, life in exile has also brought other opportunities for migration both within India and to foreign countries. Among families in exile, it is not uncommon for them to remain divided for extended periods. For instance, my host family lived in McLeod Ganj and Shimla. The father lived in McLeod with four of their school-age children who attended the Upper TCV, while the mother lived with the eldest daughter and her elderly mother-in-law in Shimla managing the family business. In addition, students leave the family home for education and work, like the many youth who come to McLeod Ganj to volunteer for the CTA.

Furthermore, since the early 1990s migration abroad has become more common. In 1991, the US-Tibet Resettlement Project gave 1,000 green cards to the CTA for distribution through a lottery among Tibetan exiles. One green card per family was allowed. Families were, thus, separated for several years before their single family member in the United States was able to bring the rest of their family to the US. It is also not uncommon for a family to send one family member, usually a son, to the United States, Canada or other developed country. The expectation is that this family member will gain employment and send remittances back home to support their family. Therefore, even among Born Refugees, families in exile may for extended periods live quite far from each other.

Despite such long-term separations, family remains central in exile. In interviews, responses to the question, "Which is more important to you family, friends or both?" were surprisingly uniform across all youth interviewed. Across Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals, family was picked out by almost half the respondents as being of the three options (i.e. family, friends, both) the most important to them. Such uniformity across these three youth communities is unusual and highlights

[1] It is also common that entire families go for winter business together.

the continued importance and centrality of family even among those whose natal family is not in exile.

For Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals, the ways that community members talk about and create family structures in McLeod Ganj serve as normative models. Family structures in the exile communities diverge in ways from those in both urban and rural Tibet. Unlike Childs et al. (2011), polygamy has been in sharp decline in exile, though it has not fully disappeared.[2] In fact, one of my participants who we met in chapter two came from a large polygynous family in Sikkim. This practice, however, is often looked down upon by Tibetans today. And even my participant was embarrassed to explain it to me.

Monogamous marriages are by far the most common in the exile communities. While the prospective bride and groom have considerable input into whom they marry, as in Tibet today the parents most often have a significant say. In my experience, marriages are frequently patrilocal with the daughter leaving her family and moving in with her new husband's. However, some new wives resist moving in with their in-laws. Klieger (2000) also noted this preference for neo-local residence among Tibetan youth in New Delhi, but he also noted that these youths understand that familial obligations will most likely bring about patrilocal residence in an extended family. Yet, in McLeod Ganj, several of my Born Refugee participants lived neolocally. In one case, the new wife pressured her new husband, Tsewo, to rent their own apartment. His parents lived only 5 minutes away, so he was able to check on them frequently and help them out now and then.[3] In another instance, a young man and woman had come from another settlement for work in McLeod Ganj. They met each other in McLeod and after getting married they remained there in order to retain their jobs.

Apart from this preference for neolocal residences, Klieger noted some nascent changes in the importance of marriage more generally. "Several men stated flatly that they didn't believe in marriage, 'I'm living with my

[2] A study conducted among youth in a New Delhi Tibetan settlement demonstrated that 18% of Tibetan youth interviewed had parents who had come from polygamous families (Klieger 2000). In addition, Nellie Grent's (2000) study of a polyandrous household in McLeod Ganj demonstrates that such families still exist today in exile, though usually in small numbers and discreetly. More anecdotally, a friend in McLeod Ganj told me of a polygynous household in which the husband took his second wife who was physically disabled and unable to find a husband.

[3] Another possible contributing factor is the relative paucity of large living spaces and the high rental cost of such spaces.

friends only not with my wife and all'" (Klieger 2000, 145). One of my participants also expressed to me her doubts in the necessity of marriage. She had been living with her boyfriend, or in her words her 'life partner.' She had no plans to marry him even after their first child. Despite these changes in how some youth in exile view marriage, family is still central notion to most of these young people, as demonstrated in statements by the youth I interviewed.

In the exile communities, Born Refugees' experiences of family set the norm for how Tibetan families are structured in India. Moreover, Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals share Born Refugees' belief in the importance of family. For youth without family in exile, what constitutes family must be negotiated in light of their current lack of biological kin nearby. Below I present three vignettes of family that exemplify the three ways in which family is conceptualized across these youth communities. Using the terms family-near, family-far, and family-absent for Born Refugees, New Arrivals, and Semi-Orphans, respectively, I demonstrate how family is being negotiated and re-created in exile both through these youths' everyday lives as well as in their everyday writings.

Family-Near

Vignette 7-1: Keeping Family Close and Almost Envy

Tsomo Jangchup is the only child in one of the founding families of the Tibetan community in McLeod Ganj. Her father, along with many other Khampa[4] guards, escorted the Dalai Lama in his escape from Lhasa and into exile in India. Her grandfather had also been one of these famous Khampa guards. While her father had elected to stay in India, her grandfather returned to Kham where he and most of this guard were killed. In addition, her father worked for thirty-six years at the Upper TCV, where in his words he was—in her words—"in the service of His Holiness." Today he is retired, and Tsomo, he, and his wife rent a building from an Indian landlord that houses both their home and the 'daily needs' store that Tsomo runs. They are all intensely supportive of the Dalai Lama, though it seems that Tsomo sometimes feels conflicted with the government's conservative stance and her love of popular culture both Indian and foreign. Yet, when I asked her if she would return to Tibet if it were free, she

[4] The appellation *Khampa* refers to individuals from the region of Tibet formally known as Kham. However, it is also used to refer specifically to men from this region, who were renowned for their fierceness and their loyalty.

was one of the few youth who replied yes unreservedly. She even once told me that if Tibet became free, McLeod Ganj would become a ghost town. She has plans to move to her father's hometown in Kham, should Tibet gain independence, adding that she wouldn't want to live in Lhasa as it had become too 'modernized.'

Tsomo had taken over the store a couple of years prior to my meeting her, after the sudden death of her sister. She typically works in the store seven days a week from 7:30 am to 10 pm, except for Mondays when she just works in the evenings. Her parents, especially her father, spend a good amount of time in the store visiting with Tsomo or chatting with neighbors who happen by. Like Dikyi's store just a bit up the street, Tsomo's family store is often a hub for neighborhood interaction. For Tsomo, family is an ever-present part of her day. Her father is in and out throughout the day, dropping off new stock for the store, sitting out front with a tea, or taking over for Tsomo when she needs to run an errand. At lunchtime, her mother brings her lunch and checks back with her later in the afternoon. While Tsomo seems to enjoy having her family around her, she has also spent considerable time living and working on her own. From time to time, she does mention that she misses her more independent life. However, upon her sister's death, she knew her parents needed her, and so quickly returned to McLeod Ganj.

For many Born Refugees, family is an immediate part of their everyday lives. From my view, Tsomo appreciated the proximity and involvement of family. For the most part, Tsomo's story of family mirrors that of the many Born Refugees I know. As discussed in previous chapters, there seems to be a general appreciation of family, though at times some have almost enviously mentioned the relative freedom that Semi-Orphans experience. These feelings of almost envy, however, are still emergent, as relatively few Born Refugees voice these same sentiments when asked about them directly. Sometimes when asked, individuals indicate that youth without families learn to "stand on their own feet." But more frequently, they are seen as victims of exile whose lack of kin and family has left them disadvantaged economically and socially.

In their everyday lives, though, the ambivalence Born Refugees often feel about this immediacy of family more often comes through. For example, in chapter two, I told the story of one of my students and her boyfriend, Nyima, who is from a high status family in Tibet. From the young woman's family's perspective, he was still a New Arrival and so not appropriate for their daughter to marry. Eventually, the family gave this young

woman an ultimatum, forcing her to leave him or leave the family. Not being able to imagine her life without her parents and siblings, she broke off the relationship with her boyfriend. Thus, while many Born Refugees enjoy the nearness of family, at times it is distinctly not appreciated.

Not all born refugees, though, lived in close geographic proximity to their family. Even for Born Refugees who do not co-reside with family, contact with parents and siblings through the telephone or Internet, visits for extended periods and other such interactions are often frequent. This nearness of family emerges not only in these youths' everyday lives but also in their everyday writings. I class this immediacy of kin and family as family-near. Among Tibetan youth living in exile, only Born Refugees live and/or interact with their parents regularly.[5] Some TCV Orphans may have an uncle living in exile and other New Arrivals might come to India with a sibling, but these youth rarely have the familial structure in India that Born Refugees enjoy. Thus, even when Born Refugee families are separated due to work, school, international migration, and the like, family is experienced as near through frequent contact. In what follows, I present several Born Refugee writings in which family plays a central role. The first of these are from Tsomo, the young woman whose family we met above. In her and others' writings in this section, we see the intimate experiences of family that distinguish Born Refugees from other Tibetan exile youth. Such uses of language function to recreate the author as a certain type of person, even if the audience for this piece of writing is only her future self as with this diary entry:

> 2/11/03 Sunday
>
> Well few years back, I was grinding some lemons to make pickle and I told my mom that when will the lemons be pickled. She said that it would take a very long time. Time passed, I dropped out of school, worked in Bangalore for 8 years, and came back in 1999 to handle my shop, and all of a sudden in 2003, my mom mentioned of the pickle lemon. And I was like laughing and telling her that mom, the pickles must have rotten. And in spite of that she ~~made~~ bought some more lemons.
>
> . . .
>
> This Saturday night when we were having thukpa [noodle soup], my mom brought something in a small bowl, smiling mischeivously. And I was like, "Oh my God! Finally we are eating lemon." ha ha It was the lemon

[5] The bourgeoning of cell phones in both Tibet and India has changed this to a degree for New Arrivals. However, during my dissertation research, cell phone contact with family in Tibet was not at all common.

> pickle ~~pickled~~ dating back to 1994. And I told my mom, "You eat first." She did, and then I had and then finally my father had some.
>
> Oh boy!! The lemon pickle did tasted good . . . [English]

The intimacy of the relationship between Tsomo and her mother is palpable in this diary entry. Tsomo was very close to her parents, especially after the death of her sister. When she wasn't working in the family store, she and her boyfriend, Tsewang, spent much of their time with her parents at home. In addition to the affection, warmth, and immediacy of family recreated in this writing, the shared history that carries through to the present in the story of the pickled lemon also positions Tsomo as a Born Refugee. Few exile youth have such experiences as they are either separated from their parents or have never known them.

Similarly, in the extended excerpt below, one Born Refugee, Rinchen Tsampel, writes to his younger brother who lives in South India. In the letter, he urges his brother to study hard in school, yet it is through his use of collective pronouns (e.g. we) and other devices that Rinchen creates a communal sense of action and urgency. In doing so, he also locates himself as a member of a close and interacting family and thus, a member of the Born Refugee community.

> . . . It seems these days you are on holiday from school. I called at home last night but I couldn't get you online. Mom told me that you always go to play basketball. It's good that you're playing games and at the same time you must keep in touch with the studies.
>
> You are all very lucky to be free and getting good opportunity to study by the helping of Sir B. Woodbury. We have worked a lot in the field at your age I struggle a lot to get some time to play. You are the lucky one who need not worry about anything.
>
> Wangyal, you must write to Sir and tell him your future goal and plan. I'm very glad & happy to know that Sir is impressed with your performance & simplicity nature. I'm proud to be your brother, But at the same time you must study hard and should fully use this chance to study in such a good school, Which is not possible with our family condition.
>
> So, my dear brother, just remember my few advice & study hard. Don't mingle with Bad companies; *Don't Smoke*, We believe in you and you must keep our hope alive. I heard that you are taking science & its really very good. At least, somebody from our family has a courage & ability to take science & become engineer in future . . . [English]

In this letter, Rinchen plays the role of the elder brother in attempting to get his brother to take his studies more seriously. He signs the letter 'Bro Rinchen' and uses words such as 'brother,' 'mom,' and 'family' to recreate these familial relationships and significantly here, obligations. More

importantly, though, is his continued use of the third person plural pronoun 'we' as well as the related genitive 'our.' The use of 'we' and 'our' demonstrates the family's collective concern for Wangyal's school performance but also, as a document that could easily be read by friends of both Rinchen and Wangyal, the presence of these pronouns places the writer and addressee as a member of a family, which by extension, negotiates their membership as a Born Refugee. Lastly, the use of the phrases 'I called at home' and 'Mom told me' makes the relationship that Rinchen has with family and home much more immediate than in writings by Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals. In a way, these phrases recreate the shared origins of the writer and receiver through the absence of a genitive marker (e.g. my, your) that would mark 'home' and 'mom' as not collectively shared. Such use of linguistic resources to negotiate familial ties is common across the writings by Born Refugees. These writings not only reflect some reality out there but also through these writings these youth recreate and renegotiate these relationships.

Many Born Refugees with whom I worked provided me with writings that either centered on or mentioned close kin relations. One young man, named Tenzin Namdol, wrote about the various places he lived with and without his parents. He wrote in English about his childhood saying '. . . my parents were told to settle in Kollegal which is in South India. We were given a house to shelter and a land to cultivate thereby earn some from the agriculture.' He goes on to say he attended a Tibetan school that was only a day, not a boarding, school implying that he lived with his family while a student there. As a young adult, he lived away from his parents but wrote repeatedly about going again to his hometown of Kollegal. He concludes the essay saying, 'I . . . took my mother & father here in D/sala [Dharamsala]. They haved a hard life in settlement [Kollegal] with excess task and not well regarding their health. At last, I came here in D/sala and I stayed with my parents . . .' These stories in which Born Refugees' parents and other family members figure prominently highlights the immediacy of family in these youths' everyday lives even when, as with Tenzin Namdol, a young person is separated from their family for an extended period.

Family-Far

New Arrivals are also separated from parents and often siblings in their lives in exile. Many of these youth come from rural areas in Tibet, so, unlike Born Refugees, do not have many avenues for keeping in contact with family in Tibet. For these youth, family is most often retraced back

to Tibet constituting what I call family-far. Even among New Arrivals with siblings in exile, as with Tsering Kunsang below, family is still experienced as family-far by orienting such relations back to parents in Tibet.

Vignette 7-2: Retracing Family

When I first met Tsering Kunsang in 2004, she was shy and quiet but also appeared pale and unwell, similar to many New Arrivals who are struggling financially in their new surroundings. She had come to India six years earlier when she was only nineteen and studied at the Transit School for New Arrivals in Lower Dharamsala. She was born in the Kham region of Tibet to a fraternal polyandrous family with two fathers, a mother and ten siblings. Just the year before, she had received a rare phone call from her mother in Tibet telling her that one of her fathers had passed away. Her father's death left Tsering missing her parents even more and worrying whether she would be able to see her remaining parents again before they too passed away.

Unlike most other New Arrivals, Tsering did have some family in exile. Her brother, Migmar, had come to India a couple of years before her. He studied at the TCV Suja and was, at the age of 23, currently finishing tenth grade at the Upper TCV. In addition, just three days before I met with Tsering, another brother, who was also a monk, had arrived in McLeod Ganj. He was staying with Tsering, and Migmar had come over from his rented room near the TCV for several days, too. As the oldest of the siblings in India, Tsering was something of a mother to her brothers, making sure they had enough to eat and that Migmar was studying hard at school. In the days after Tsering's second brother arrived, she appeared quite exhausted but also told me that she was very happy to have more family nearby.

Despite the presence of her siblings in McLeod Ganj, Tsering also sought out those recently arrived from Tibet for news of the rest of her family and other relatives. One day, when I was visiting Tsering, she told me that a group of New Arrivals had come in from Nepal the day before. She wanted to go and talk to them to see if there was any news from home. We walked down from her one room apartment to the Reception Center. She talked to several New Arrivals who were also from Kham but did not find anyone who knew her family. She told me that she did her best to ask each new group for news. On one of these trips to the Reception Center, I asked her if she thought about returning to Tibet. She replied as almost all New Arrivals I have asked did: She would like to move abroad and get

a passport so she could visit her parents but she did not think she would return otherwise.

Tsering's story is in some ways unusual because two of her siblings also live in McLeod Ganj. For most New Arrivals, they are the only member of their family outside of Tibet. However, for Tsering, as the oldest of the three, she had to take on a role that overlapped parent and elder sister. She was clearly uncomfortable in this role, especially since she was unemployed at the time and living only on the small sum her parents managed to get hand delivered to her from Tibet and the limited money she made selling homemade bracelets in the market. When I spent time with Tsering and her brothers, they did not joke and laugh together as did many Born Refugee siblings I worked with, but instead worried over whether the newest arrival of the family should take a job or go to school, how they would pay for groceries, and where Tsering might find work. Thus, despite the immediacy of family among these New Arrivals, their experiences of family diverged markedly from their Born Refugee counterparts.

For most New Arrivals as well as for Tsering and her brothers, maintaining links to family requires retracing transnational ties that are not always simple to maintain. Phone calls, like the one from Tsering's mother, are rare and for many from more remote areas non-existent. The Internet provides some contact again for those in more urban areas but not for rural families. In addition, mail routes are unreliable between Tibet and India. Most often letters are hand delivered but on the Tibet side the handing off or receiving of letters from/for India must be done with care in order to not arouse suspicions. These tenuous ties to family in Tibet often intensify these youths' anxiety and loneliness. Their anxiety is often further heightened by their difficulties finding work, which according to many New Arrivals is attributable to the absence of family in India.

In a survey I conducted in McLeod Ganj, approximately twenty percent of New Arrival youth were either unemployed or gave only English student at one of the local free English schools as their occupation. As I discussed in chapter two, the low level of education that many New Arrivals possess upon arriving in India, the perception of New Arrivals as untrustworthy and unclean, as well as their few ties to the larger community does not position them favorably in McLeod. In September 2003, there was an article in *Contact*, a local English language newsletter, entitled "The Costs of Living". I presented an excerpt of this letter earlier, but would like to spend a bit more time examining it here. In this article, a foreign volunteer for the newsletter had interviewed four young male

New Arrivals on their experiences in McLeod Ganj. The aim of the article was to raise awareness of the lack of employment opportunities afforded many New Arrivals. Significantly, the most important hindrance, voiced by the Tibetans themselves, was their lack of family and familial networks in the diaspora:

> The only job I could get was in a restaurant. They paid me 500 [rupees] per month to work 8am–11pm every day. Rent is usually 700/800 [rupees] per month for one room. What can I do? I have no family here.
>
> . . .
>
> Loans are not easily given to Tibetans, and existing Tibetan businesses rarely employ others but close family members. (Brown 2003, 7)

New Arrivals are well acquainted with the importance of family in Tibet. From the perspective of youth living in Tibet, the diaspora is often seen as a land overflowing with opportunity. Once they arrive in exile, many are surprised to find so few opportunities and, further, the close tie between opportunity and family connections. New Arrivals' lack of familial connections, appropriate education, and negative stereotypes often induce youth to look backward toward Tibet. Many New Arrivals' writings locate family as far away. In particular, through the series of poems given to me by Palden Paljor, one can see his excitement and hopefulness in this excerpt from the poem "The Consoling Sun," written at a nomad camp as he walked out of Tibet.

> while at the start of the journey through air
> one' s views are in a clear mirror
> like a turquoise mandala
> the mind is happy one hundred thousand fold [Tibetan]

Yet, within a few years of arriving in exile he appears disillusioned, as exemplified in the poem "A Surplus of Dispute" in chapter 3. In this poem, Palden expresses his frustration with both long-term Tibetan exiles as well as New Arrivals. And lastly, during my fieldwork with Palden, I could see his orientation to and nostalgia for Tibet when he was teaching his young child the names of animals. One day Palden and I were sitting at one of the tables in the restaurant where he worked when he was a participant in my study. With his son on his lap, he began to write a list of animal names with a drawing of each animal to the right of the word. Now and then, he made that animal's sound to keep his son engaged. The translated list is below:

> Cow
> Yak

Horse
Donkey
Sheep
Goat
Pig
Bear
Ewe
Dzomo[6] [Tibetan]

The first animal on the list, a cow, is not surprising. It is common that children are first taught the names of the animals they see most often. Cows wander the streets of McLeod Ganj and much of India. However, the ever-present monkey is notable in its absence. McLeod Ganj is rife with rhesus macaques. They sun themselves on roofs, steal food out of stores, and wreak havoc on the homes of those who forget to close their door. It is almost impossible to go through a single day without seeing at least one of these monkeys. Yet, this animal wasn't salient enough for Palden to put it on the list of animals for his two-year-old son.

Looking across the animals on the list, 50% (cow, ewe, goat, sheep, donkey) are common to both McLeod Ganj and Tibet, while the other 50% (yak, horse, pig, bear, dzomo) would most likely rarely if ever be seen by Palden's son in McLeod Ganj. These animals, though, are common in Tibet. In the three or so months I lived in Tibet, I saw each of these animals, except for the bear, in the course of my everyday life. However, in the almost two years I lived in McLeod Ganj, out of these animals I have only seen a bear, which sadly was along the side of the road at the end of a chain, being used to entertain riders on one of the many long distance buses that crisscross India daily. The composition of this list, in particular the absence of *monkey* and any other animals specific to India, highlights an emerged or emergent nostalgia for Tibet. Through Palden's instilling in his son the importance of knowing the cultural inventory of Tibet, he recreates his own shift in orientation to exile. The hopefulness of a better life in exile that his first poem spoke of is gone. It has been replaced by disillusionment with Tibetan exile society; increasingly he is looking back to Tibet. However, having left it so long ago, there is little chance he can return now without serious consequences.[7]

[6] A dzomo is the offspring of a yak and a cow. It is a common dairy animal in Tibet.

[7] It is not unusual for young Tibetans in Chinese Tibet to come to McLeod Ganj for an education. These young people usually stay for fewer than two years because they know that the Chinese government will turn a blind eye to their escape in order to benefit from having better educated citizens.

In other writings, too, New Arrivals retrace their natal ties back to Tibet. One young man, Lopsang, wrote about his family in several homework assignments for his English class. I should point out that kinship terms commonly comprise beginning language lessons. However, Lopsang's English fluency was much more advanced, so I do find it meaningful that he used kinship vocabulary in this assignment.

> When are you going to see your parents?
> Maybe I'm going to see my parents in 2004 or 2005.
> . . .
> Lhamo: Do your parents live here?
> Tashi: No, They're back in Tibet. I want to go back to Tibet soon. [English]

In this first assignment, students were told to write five questions and answers using the phrase "going to X." Lopsang's other questions dealt with writing letters after dinner, the return of Tibet to Tibetans, and travel plans for the following year. Through his posing of the question above, Lopsang places his parents as distant from him. So distant, in fact, that he would need to plan two to three years in advance of the visit. Such a question would not be posed by most Born Refugees or Semi-Orphans. While Born Refugees may not live in close proximity to their parents, the majority live a journey of only a day or two away. The second homework excerpt further reinforces this young man's place as a New Arrival. Not only does he locate his parents as being in Tibet, but also by using the word *back* he retraces his migration out of Tibet. Semi-Orphans rarely speak or write about going *back* to Tibet, even if they have retained some memories of their lives there. Lastly, the mere inclusion of homework for an English class places the author in the New Arrival community, as other youth have learned English through their education in one of the Tibetan exile secondary schools.

For New Arrivals, family-far, in a community where family is the central unit, means that they are in a social space that is even further devalued, a space that leaves them caught between the importance of family (which is for them only in Tibet) and the promise and opportunities they had hoped for in India. The tension between family in Tibet and living in India was most poignantly portrayed in one young man's journal entry. Here he speaks about being in English class, but thinking of home and family in Tibet.

> Today, my body is at school in class but my mind flies out the classroom window at times into the empty sky. At other times, I miss the beautiful meadows and pastures of Tibet. At times, I hear every word of my teacher.

> At other times, my parents and siblings left behind in my homeland, The Land of the Snows, appear easily before my eyes. [Tibetan]

Juxtapositions of Tibet and the classroom on alternating sentences and the use of the conjunctive phrase 'at (other) times,' create a sense of being pulled in opposite directions. His use, too, of 'left behind' is reminiscent of the use of *satha* 'distant place' in chapter six.

Through the creation and circulation of these writings, New Arrival youth simultaneously negotiate their membership in this community of practice and bring to the fore their distance from and, therefore, lack of family. Out of this emerges contexts in which slippages may occur. For in highlighting family-far in a community where family plays an important role, these youth do not accumulate social capital that would induce other youth to pick up this practice. Even though Born Refugees maybe living distinct from family, they do not see family-far as advantageous. Therefore, I suggest that unlike Semi-Orphans' family-absent where the want of family is less noticeable through its absence, family-far actually emphasizes this familial deficiency, leaving New Arrivals in a less than influential social position to effect change.

Family-Absent

New Arrivals and Semi-Orphans both experience exile without the family structure of Born Refugees. Among Semi-Orphans, though, family is distant but because for most of these youth it is also unknown, their lives and writings negotiate kin as family-absent. Family-absent emerges in the use of kinship terms, perceptions of family relations, and most often in a relative dearth of writings about family. For, unlike New Arrivals, Semi-Orphan's memories of Tibet and their family there are much less clear as we see with Tenzin Dolma in the following vignette.

Vignette 7-3: Preferring Family-Absent

Tenzin Dolma is a petite young woman with sharp features and a pointed chin. She can most often be seen in jeans, sneakers and her bright red jacket. Both of her ears are pierced several times and sport silver jewelry instead of the usual gold that older and more conservative Tibetans favor. Tenzin was born in Tibet but her parents, having been allowed to visit India on pilgrimage, placed her at the Upper TCV when she was only five years old. Believing she would have a better life in exile, they then returned home to Tibet. Tenzin grew up at the Upper TCV living with around thirty other children and a housemother in one of the many *kimtsang* or boarding

houses for Semi-Orphans and boarders whose families live in one of the other Tibetan settlements.

One afternoon Tenzin, her friend Phurbu, and I walk down to the Dalai Lama's temple. Phurbu isn't feeling well and he heard there was a lama granting audiences today, so he was hoping the lama could give him a blessing to cure his illness. We arrive at the temple and receive our blessings from the lama, after which we circumambulate the temple and then move on to walk the *lingkor*. The *lingkor* is a path on which McLeod Ganj residents walk in order to circumambulate the Dalai Lama's entire temple and residential compound. Along the far side of the *lingkor* there are several stupas, rows of prayer flags, and a resting place with benches. Phurbu walks over to one of the large prayer wheels and turns it walking around it to keep it moving. Tenzin and I sit down on a bench and continue our conversation about her family.

She tells me that since she was sent by her family when she was only five, she doesn't remember very much about them. She has some vague pictures of her mother's face but she isn't sure if they are grounded in reality. In her opinion, she could walk past her parents on the street and never know who they were. Her parents wrote down their names for her, so she has those. However, after they entrusted her to the Upper TCV in 1985, she has had no contact with them.

I ask her if she wishes that her family was here in McLeod Ganj or at least in India. She responds that she isn't sure if she would want them living with her. She enjoys much more freedom in making choices about her life than young people who have a family in India. She goes on to say that she feels like she doesn't have any family at all, and that is fine for her. Her only regret is that she has difficulty relating to older people since she grew up around so many of her peers and only a single housemother. We sit quietly for a couple of minutes waiting for Phurbu to finish turning the prayer wheel, then we continue along the *lingkor*.

Tenzin Dolma's experiences of family are in many ways typical of Semi-Orphans. After separating from their family, few ever hear from their parents or relatives again. One young man and a Semi-Orphan told me that he hears from his parents in Tibet now and again via letters. A couple of years ago, they even met at the Nepal/Tibet border, each standing on opposite sides of a river that flows between the two countries. He spoke with them for a short time but mostly they just looked at each other. He said that they seemed nice but were strangers to him, not really his family.

Over the past fifty years, such stories have become relatively common among Tibetan exiles. It is not uncommon for Tibetan parents living in Tibet to either send one of their young children across the Tibetan border with a Tibetan escort[8] or to drop a son or daughter off at one of the Tibetan schools on the occasion that a Tibetan family gotten a visa to visit India. According to the Reception Center in McLeod Ganj, in 2008 approximately 2500 Tibetans arrived from Tibet. Among these 789 were under the age of eighteen, with 70% or 552 arriving without a parent or other adult to care for them. This means that just over one-third of those who arrived in McLeod Ganj in 2008 alone were under the age of eighteen, what according to the Reception Center representative was a typical year with regard to numbers of new Tibetan exiles.

Among Tenzin Dolma's collection of writings was one piece in which she described what it was like during the first days at the Upper TCV away from her parents:

> Being in Exile
>
> I was born in Tibet in the year 1980. At the age of 5 yrs. My parents decided to send me to India to have a better life and get opportunity to study, which is very important to make one's life more interesting. In the year 1985, Kalachakra was held at Dorjee Den and no. of Tibetan people were escape from Tibet during that time. So, I was one among them. After the teaching, I was admitted at Tibetan Children's Village School , Dharamsala. And my parents went back to their homeland. Being a very small child, I was so scared to be in the unknown place without them. I couldn't remember the days & nights I had cried in the absence of my parents. But slowly, slowly I was able to adjust with other kids. When I came to know each one of their stories, we are almost in same position. We became very close and feels like brothers and sisters. Very luckily, my home foster parents are so good that we don't miss our parents at all. [English]

She goes on to say that as she has gotten older, she has come to miss having her parents. She sees other young people with their parents and wonders what her parents are like, where they are living, and how old they are now. She says, "[I]n exile I meet many people, friends, relationship to replace what I have lost." Despite her longing for family, Tenzin is a rather happy young woman. Her life is filled with friends and work. Yet, like many Semi-Orphans, she sees the relative ease with which Born Refugees

[8] Such escorts are not unlike coyotes who help Mexicans to cross the U.S./Mexican border undetected. From among the Tibetan escorts I have met, most are young Tibetan men in their twenties.

experience life in India without the pressure of finding paid work and often with the means to obtain a university education.

This excerpt from her story of coming into exile it particularly informative as it deals both with family and then with her friends at the TCV, though each is written about differently. In my analysis, I see the phrase 'went back to their homeland' as the narrative pivot between family and friends. In the first part of the narrative, Tenzin Dolma gives a chronology of events that lead to her life at the TCV. This portion is almost devoid of affect. In fact, she uses emphatic stress as in '. . . it is very important . . .' only once, but this statement is in relation to education in India. In the second portion, though, she uses intensifiers and emphatic stress frequently. For example, she writes 'we don't miss our parents at all.' The uses of the intensifier 'at all' and emphatic stress marker 'so' in 'so good' affectively constitute her relationship with her house parents in a positive manner. She also displays positive affect toward the other children in the house when she uses 'very' in 'We became very close and feels like brothers and sisters.' Typical among Semi-Orphans is this relative absence of intensifiers and other affective markers when writing about family and their relatively frequent use when describing school and resulting friendships.

While Tenzin represents the typical Semi-Orphan, not all of these youth were sent by their family into exile with hopes for a better life. Some of the youth with whom I worked were actual orphans, having lost both parents, while others had escaped abusive homes in Tibet coming as young children and adolescents into exile in India. In a collection of writings by one such young woman, Chödön Nyima, family was rarely mentioned, except one writing through which she distances herself from family through mocking and criticizing her brother:

Three Empties

My oldest brother, Cheme, has three empties:
empty brain, empty wallet and empty stomach.
There is so much poverty about him.
Brother Cheme, you are a poor person.
He stayed in class six and class five for a few years each.
After that, he could not finish school and so became a monk. After a while, he could not stay in the monastery either.
He joined the army and fought for them.
He is very shy. Empty brother, you are so sad.
In my entire life, I am surprised that I know such an empty person. [Tibetan]

Apart from this last writing, family is made salient in the Semi-Orphan corpus through its absence and generality. I offer that this position of

family-absent negotiated in Semi-Orphan writings and lives is quite different from the family-far position among New Arrivals. Family-far actually emphasizes the non-normative position of New Arrival youth, while family-absent demonstrates a simple lack of family. Both orientations create context for slippage, though Semi-Orphan's family-absent does so because the absence is overlooked not ignored as we see among New Arrivals.

In this chapter, we began by exploring the ways in which family was configured in historic Tibet as well as familial structures today on the Tibetan plateau and in the exile communities. With these histories and presents of family among Tibetans as a backdrop, we also investigated how Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj negotiate membership in their respective communities through the notions of family-near, family-far, and family-absent. With contact between these differing orientations to family, changes, drags, and slippages occur and re-occur as a result. Born Refugee experiences of family set the norm for family relations among New Arrivals and Semi-Orphans. New Arrivals' orientations to family back in Tibet are seen as deficient and often Sincizing and so not taken up by other youth. Lastly, Semi-Orphan's family-absent is largely unnoticed. Through these differing orientations to family, not only do these youth negotiate membership in a community of practice but they also create, reinforce, and at times challenge the divides between these youth communities. In the next chapter, we turn from family to friendship where we will see that unlike Semi-Orphans' often overlooked family-absent in relationship to friendships they are anything but unnoticed. In fact, I argue that they are leading an emergent change in the social structure in McLeod Ganj through their experiences and relations of friends and friendship.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'FRIENDS LIKE YOU ARE REALLY OSCAR WINNER'

Friendship in anthropological research is a comparatively recent area of study, and takes much of its theory from preceding studies of kinship. While kinship has long been a cornerstone of anthropology, until the mid-1980s it was understood in purely biological and affinal terms. Starting with David Schneider's (1984) *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*, the focus in kinship turned away from describing kin relations as almost autonomous systems, divorced from everyday life toward a focus on how kinship relations work and are altered in actual practice. With this recognition of the dynamic nature of kinship, kinship as an area of study in anthropology experienced a resurgence in interest and research.

Out of this re-centering on the social life of kinship came Janet Carsten's (2004) suggestion for bringing together various forms of kin and non-kin connections under the term relatedness. However, such an expansive category presented its own difficulties. First, it seems unlikely that any relationships that are meaningful to our participants would be able to fall outside of this term, leaving it with little explanatory power. More importantly, as Desai and Killik (2010, 5) point out, Carsten's relatedness "also carries the danger of masking the boundaries that people might themselves posit in the articulation of those relations." Such "indigenous distinctions" (Desai and Killik 2010) are important for understanding the various forms that relatedness takes in a given culture. I find this focus on indigenous distinctions particularly useful in looking at friendship among McLeod Ganj youth. As we learned in the previous chapter, youth do distinguish between friends and family with many expressing cohesive rationalizations for their distinctions. These metapragmatic discourses emphasize differentiations between friends and family that are integral to understanding how these conceptions of friends/family as well as the actual relationships are created and maintained, even when family is far away or nonexistent.

Given the ubiquity of familial separations in the Tibetan diaspora, it would seem that the value of friendship would be quite high across all segments of society. However, in a community so intensely focused on cultural preservation and in which family has long been the main social unit,

the continued importance placed on family rivals and often overrides that of friendship. As we saw in chapter seven, family is—as compared with friendship—still conceptualized among youth in McLeod Ganj as both more important and more advantageous.

In the next portion of this chapter, I explore the contours of friendship among New Arrival youth. I begin with a discussion of their refashioning of Tibetan *kyidug* 'associations' as based on friendships in exile to suggest that despite their attempts to utilize kyidug to create and strengthen friendships, these attempts are not often successful. Therefore, non-New Arrival youth have not taken up such a friend-based kyidug and, in fact, are rarely even aware of this New Arrival practice.

Such almost unknown networks of friendship among New Arrivals have brought about an organization of this chapter that is different from those preceding. Thus, in the remainder of this chapter, I turn from my discussion of New Arrivals to focus on Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans because the influences on these youths' friendships come from a very different source. While New Arrivals rely upon traditional Tibetan social organizations to form friendships, Born Refugees' and Semi-Orphans' friendships are influenced by their access to and participation in globally circulating medias in the forms of television and mobile telephony. To better ground the experiences of Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, I layout changes in India that resulted in an exceptional expansion of access to new media, tracing how these changes are shifting the value of friendship among these two communities in McLeod Ganj. First, though, we will delve into New Arrivals and their formulations of friendship.

New Arrivals, Kyidug, and Friendship

In pre-1950s Tibet, kyidug or 'associations' often began from alliances among families, commonly several families linked by a particular occupation. Kyidug functioned to provide financial and social support to its members. Members paid an initiation fee upon joining as well as monthly dues. These contributions were the financial basis for the association's activities. Most kyidug adopted a name and some even had office space for meetings, keeping paperwork, and conducting business. Such associations are not unique to Tibetans. Analogous organizations, based in occupation and allowing hereditary membership, are found in many parts of the world, like those in Ethiopia as discussed by James Ellison (2009).

For Tibetans, a kyidug's main purpose was to provide financial assistance to a family or individual, but members also attended each other's

important life events, such as weddings and births. In addition, once a year, each kyidug would also use some of their funds to throw an elaborate party called a *lhapso* (Miller 1956). *Lhapso* began with prayers and offerings "then the group settle[d] down for the real business of the day—drinking *chang* (a rice or millet beer), feasting, dancing, and singing Tibetan folksongs" (1956, 161).

In historic Tibet, kyidug played important roles in maintaining peaceful community relations, assisting families in need, as well as creating networks to assist members' children as they became adults. In these organizations in Tibet, family and occupation were their bases. With the migration into exile, kyidug were not wholly left behind. In fact, kyidug in exile share many commonalities with those in historic Tibet, though neither are they a complete reproduction of these pre-exile associations. Ann Frechette (2002), in her description of Tibetan exile kyidug in Nepal, states that unlike in Tibet, where kyidug were organized chiefly around occupation, among Tibetans living in Nepal they are organized around place of origin (e.g. region, city). Financial assistance remains a focus of the groups' aims as they "pool resources for investments, loans, and insurance" (Frechette 2002, 185); they also continue to celebrate weddings and births. Kyidug are a means of expanding "networks of business contacts and obtaining capital for new business ventures" (185), not unlike *guanxi* relationships in China (Smart 1999). While the establishment and expansion of business connections may have been part of a kyidug's function in Tibet, the development of business networks seems to figure more prominently in exile kyidug, at least among long-term exiles.

In McLeod Ganj, these types of kyidug also exist. For instance, the Gyarong kyidug, made up of families from the Gyarong region in eastern Tibet,[1] functions similarly to those that Frechette describes in Nepal. Many of these families have lived in exile since the 1950s, and thus are quite well established in India. These older and relatively affluent kyidug position members' children and extended relatives well in McLeod Ganj by providing them with contacts and opportunities. In addition to kyidug among well-established exiles, similar associations have also been formed in McLeod Ganj by New Arrival youth. Such kyidug differ from those like the Gyarong kyidug and kyidug in historic Tibet. Membership is not based

[1] Many of the families from Gyarong migrated *en masse* to McLeod Ganj, not only reestablishing their kyidug soon after arrival but also creating and settling in a small cluster of houses just outside McLeod Ganj that is known as Gyarong Trongpa or Gyarong City. Today, however, many non-Gyarongs live in Gyarong Trongpa and a good number of Gyarongs live elsewhere in McLeod Ganj.

on family, as in historic Tibet, nor is it based solely on region of origin, as is seen in Frechette (2002) and with older kyidug in McLeod Ganj. Instead, these kyidug seem to be based simply on one's membership in the New Arrival community. An additional dissimilarity between New Arrival kyidug and these other kyidug, as we see in the following vignette, is that these associations are often unsuccessful and short-lived.

Vignette 8-1: A Nun's Appendectomy

One afternoon Jampa was telling me a story over a cup of tea about a young nun in McLeod Ganj who needed an appendectomy but didn't have the money to pay for it. He said his 'association' had used some money out of their fund to pay for her surgery, and slowly the young woman had paid the money back. I asked him if he was talking about a kyidug and he said he was. I told him I didn't realize that New Arrivals had their own kyidug. I had thought that only families and not individuals participated in this kind of organization. Jampa told me that among New Arrivals in McLeod Ganj, kyidug were usually formed by individuals. He went on to tell me that he had been a member of two kyidug over the six years he had been in India. The kyidug were comprised solely of New Arrivals and were meant to make the transition into the exile community a little less unstable. The first kyidug, which paid for the nun's appendectomy, had a relatively stable membership. The majority of the members paid their dues and made other donations to the group. It remained cohesive and active for over a year. Slowly, though, members moved away from McLeod Ganj to other settlements and some went back to Tibet, so the kyidug slowly dissolved.

Having had a positive experience in this particular kyidug, Jampa found another New Arrival association. In this kyidug, however, only some members paid dues and made other contributions. Others were always asking for money. When the kyidug had finally managed to accumulate a sum of money, the treasurer and president decided to have a lhapso complete with food and alcohol, thus draining all of the kyidug's funds. After this, the members fought constantly. Some thought the lhapso was a waste of their funds, while others defended the action. In the end, the kyidug disbanded.

As is demonstrated by this short vignette, kyidug formed among New Arrivals are not often as successful as those like the Gyarong kyidug. They are much less affluent, their members are more transient, and they have

limited connections that can assist other members. The first kyidug above in which Jampa was involved was highly successful in comparison with the other stories I heard from New Arrivals regarding other kyidug. Even this kyidug, though, lasted a relatively short time, disbanding after only a year. Some of the reasons for the difficulties in establishing enduring kyidug stem from the youth and transience of the New Arrival members, in particular, the fact that *all* members of these kyidug are young and have not established themselves in any particular place in India.

In Tibet and among well-established exiles, kyidug membership is comprised of people from a range of ages, usually spanning several generations. However, the difficulties that New Arrival kyidug experience come from more than just the age of the members. For as we will see below, informal financial assistance networks that have formed among Semi-Orphans have provided significant assistance in times of need. As youth who spent their childhood, adolescence, and for some their teen years with parents and family members, the sudden transition to life in exile without familial support is exceedingly difficult. New Arrival youth who participated in my study and/or allowed me to interview them most often told me that they rely on other New Arrivals for emotional support but none told me of regular informal financial support networks that seem to be common and successful among Semi-Orphans. Several New Arrivals did tell me about kyidug, some of which are relatively successful but many of which fail.

I suggest that New Arrivals are more likely to attempt to rely upon family in Tibet because other New Arrivals are often transient and too financially disadvantaged to significantly depend upon for emotional or monetary support. Such a perspective on friendship is evident in their identification of family as more important than friendship (46%) and in stating that a lack of family in exile is disadvantageous (48%). This lack of value placed on friends and friendship among New Arrivals also emerged in their everyday writings. In the New Arrival corpus, only one youth, Lopsang, included a piece that dealt with friends and friendship. It is a poem that addresses the difficulties of friendship.

> Between friends without a connection, having affection
> Like clean and pure water is common.
> It is better if the friendship stays clear, if tainted scents do not stay
> It is better if friendship connections are not broken long. [Tibetan]

In this poem, Lopsang suggests that friendships between individuals who are apart are often easily maintained and remain like clean water. And

that while at time conflicts or 'tainted scents' arise, that it is important to quickly resolve any such friction or discord. Despite the benefits of such long-distance friendships, in the last line of this poem he reverses his footing saying that, regardless, it is better if separations do not endure for long. In this one writing on friendship, this relationship is tied to separation, possibly tracing back to Tibet or denoting relationships with Tibetans and foreigners in other countries. But it does not present friendship as a solid resource for support. Instead it emphasizes the difficulties in maintaining such relationships.

Despite the presence of friendship in the everyday lives of many New Arrivals, friendship was not a common theme in this corpus. For although New Arrivals most often have only other New Arrival friends on whom to rely, among those with whom I spoke these friendships are not often enduring. Moreover, their efforts to continue with the Tibetan tradition of kyidug not only often fail, but due to these youths' marginalization in the community other youth without family nearby (e.g. Semi-Orphans, Born Refugees living apart from parents) do not see kyidug as particularly useful and so do not adopt it. Therefore, despite the innovative nature of their kyidug as based in individuals/friends instead of family, these kyidug create a slippage as they are unable to effect any type of social change in the wider exile society. Yet, as it will see in the next section friends and friendship are significantly more important both among Semi-Orphans and Born Refugees.

Semi-Orphans, Born Refugees, and Friendship in Media

Over the past several years, friendship appears to have become increasingly important among Born Refugees. Several of these youth have expressed to me admiration and what seemed to me to be slight envy that a number of Semi-Orphans were economically and socially successful without the constraints of family. Friendship as an increasingly valued relationship among Tibetan youth has not emerged, however, solely out of the presence of a large community of socially and economically successful Semi-Orphans. After all, Semi-Orphans have been part of the Tibetan exile community since its inception in 1959. I maintain that, in addition to the successes of older as well as youth Semi-Orphans, changes in the access to media, mainly in the form of global text messaging and foreign television programs, are further bolstering this shift in valuations.

The two sectors discussed here, Indian telecommunications and television, had been government-run and controlled since their beginnings in

the late 1800s and 1950s, respectively. However, after almost a decade of increasing economic distress, the Indian financial crisis of 1991 pushed the country to near bankruptcy. The International Monetary Fund intervened in the crisis, suffusing the economy with much needed funds while simultaneously requiring a liberalization of the Indian economy (Mukherji 2009). The privatization of television broadcasting and telecommunications were among the policies of liberalization that occurred in the early 1990s, just as the youth on whom this ethnography focuses were completing their secondary education.

The first private cell phone provider began service in 1995, with the most marked increase in usage occurring some seven years later as the erection of cell phone towers brought inexpensive cell phones to many areas of rural India. This privatization of cell phone providers also coincided with a new developments in cell phone technology. Such advancements made cell phones widely available, precipitating an increase (from thirteen million to thirty-five million) in the number of cell phone subscriptions in India between 2002 and 2004 (Mukherji 2009). Today, India is rivaled only by China in growth in number of mobile phone subscriptions. Although mobile phones were common in urban India much earlier, they did not reach McLeod Ganj until the early 2000s. In keeping with the surge in cell phones between 2002 and 2004, cell phone towers in McLeod quadrupled, going from one to four, during this period. By the mid-2000s, most Tibetan youth were able to purchase cell phones relatively cheaply and even send and receive inexpensive text messages internationally. By the mid- to late 2000s, even the poorest of my participants owned a cell phone.

The ability to send and receive text messages internationally has brought these youth into greater immediate contact with globally circulating ideas about the role and value of friends. In addition, over the eight to ten years since Tibetan youth have had access to cell phones and text message technology, a practice has sprung up of saving aphorisms and jokes on their cell phones. Such text messages, called chain text messages (CTM),[2] are popular across India as well as in many other countries. The topics of these CTM range from love and sex to friendship and gender relations. Friendship, though, is among the most frequent of topics in these CTM. Youth save these messages on their phones, send them to others or sometimes sit with friends and read them aloud. Through these text messages,

[2] CTM are text messages that have not been authored by the sender, circulate verbatim, and may be humorous and/or sexual in nature (Ling, Julsrud, and Yttri 2005).

Tibetan youth not only learn about ways of being in other places but also by recirculating them among other youth, they negotiate an identity by presenting themselves to others as having certain ideas and values.

In one CTM in the Semi-Orphan corpus, which ends with ‘Friend like you are really Oscar winner,’ friends are not only placed on par with winning an Oscar, but the evoking of the Oscars, a program watched by many Tibetan youth, brings with it images of glamour, wealth, and global travel. Thus, by equating friends with the ability to win an Oscar, these youth are not only negotiating a higher social value for friend-based networks but also more subtly tying friendship with something akin to an imagined global community that is intertwined with images of ‘the West.’

In a corpus of almost nine hundred CTM I collected from Tibetan youth in McLeod Ganj friendship played a prominent role in thirty-six percent of these messages. Family, however, figured prominently in only a single message. Among the over three hundred text messages that dealt with friends and friendship, almost ninety percent spoke about friendship in ways that demonstrated and reinforced the positive valuations of these relationships among Tibetan youth. A large number of the messages also evoke images of ‘the West’ through their use of words and situations that, like the Oscars above, are imagined to have originated outside India. Through the recirculation of CTM jokes and aphorisms about friendship, these youth are reinforcing the social context of their everyday lives in which the relative value of friendship and family is being shifted.

In addition to this influx of new media messages, the larger world has come into the everyday lives of Tibetan youth through an increase in access to international television programs. Changes to Indian television broadcasting began a bit in advance of the IMF’s 1991 economic intervention, but accelerated after the mandated liberalization. The first expansion of the availability of television had occurred in the early 1980s as India prepared to host The Asian Games in 1982. Around this time, regulation of television imports and domestic manufacturing was reduced, resulting in a marked increase in the number of homes in India with a television. By 1993, seventy-five percent of the population had access to television (Mankekar 1999). In 1995, the Supreme Court of India declared the government’s monopoly of broadcasting unconstitutional, opening the door to international media corporations and programming (Mukherji 2009). Today, channels such as HBO are available across India, including McLeod Ganj. Moreover, a variety of foreign television shows, predominately British and American, compete with Indian dramas and Bollywood musicals. Shows such as *The Drew Carey Show, Gray’s Anatomy, Law and Order: Spe-*

cial Victims Unit, Bones, and *Friends* comprise a significant proportion of the television shows watched by exile youth, with viewership comprised largely of Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans. These two youth communities have had greater access to these shows because they are more likely to be able to afford a television than New Arrivals, but also due to their much higher English language fluency gained through their exposure to English in school, McLeod Ganj, and India more generally.

The liberalization of Indian television broadcasting also brought in many examples of ways of being and relating to others. In particular, the television show *Friends* has gained popularity among youth in McLeod Ganj. The popularity of this show was brought to my attention one of the first few days after I hired my research assistant, Wangmo. She and I were sitting in my apartment watching television, when she asked me if I liked *Friends*. We then began discussing the various characters on the show and their involvements with each other. She asked me which *Friends* characters I thought I was most similar to. She told me that she thought Phoebe matched her personality best. In the ensuing years, I have had several similar conversations, with most citing *Friends* as their favorite television program. Even though *Friends* has not been making new episodes since 2004, the show remains very popular in McLeod Ganj.

It is a difficult matter, though, to say how much this television show has impacted the Tibetan youth with whom I worked. Studies of television have highlighted that viewers are not passive consumers of the messages they receive through this medium. In fact, the context of viewing has an important impact on what viewers see as meaningful (Thompson 1995). Yet in television's ability to "[speak] to our collective worries and to our yearning to improve, redeem, or repair our individual or collective lives" (Taylor 1989, 3) it seems unlikely that it would not to some extent shape how we see the world and our relations in it. Jillian Sandell in her paper examining *Friends* draws upon this quote immediately above but also suggests that television shows become a "fantasy space" where "cultural anxieties become temporarily resolved" (Sandell 1998, 153). Without overstating the role of this and other friend-focused television shows in the lives of McLeod Ganj youth, I suggest that the emergent importance of friendship among Tibetan youth has provided a context in which they see themselves as particularly connected to the characters on *Friends* as well as such shows as *Grey's Anatomy* or *The Drew Carey Show* that also center on characters' friendships. The anxieties they feel about the emerging changes in kinship networks can find resolution in the relations between these American characters with whom they not only see connections

but also through these connections are linked to global mediascapes (Appadurai 1996) in which these programs participate. Thus, *Friends* and other similarly focused shows can be seen as not only resolving, if only in thirty minute episodes, the current changes in kinship but also providing a means by which these youth can participate in globalization.

While the influences of friend-centered television programs and of CTM that positively evaluate friendships are integral to understanding why friendship is now emerging as an important relation, they are only part of the picture. Semi-Orphans' experiences of exile out of which have emerged everyday writings about friends and friendship, are also influential in this social change currently underway.

You Can't Live without a Friend: Semi-Orphans

In the Semi-Orphan community, friends become 'like brothers and sisters.' In chapter seven, Tenzin Dolma wrote in her personal journal about the other children at the Upper TCV in just this way. I have reprinted an excerpt from this journal entry below:

> But slowly, slowly I was able to adjust with other kids. When I came to know each one of their stories, we are almost in same position. We became very close and feels like brothers and sisters. [English]

In my experience with Semi-Orphans, not only do they often feel like brothers and sisters but their relationships function in many ways like sibling relations. These friendships are based on a shared past as housemates at school and exhibit both economic and affective dimensions that as we will see diverge from the friendships among Born Refugees. Most often these Semi-Orphan friendships aren't talked about in terms of kinship; and, in fact, they are differentiated from kinship. However, in the ways that these friendships function in McLeod Ganj, they share many characteristics with relations among family and kin. For example, a young woman we met earlier, named Yangkyi, had just finished her Masters degree and was living in McLeod Ganj with one of her former housemates from when they had been at the TCV together. This housemate, also a Semi-Orphan, was living with her elderly uncle who had left Tibet just two years prior. While Yangkyi waited to hear if she had gotten a teaching position at one of the TCVs, her friend and the friend's uncle provided her with food and necessities as well as a place to stay. When Yangkyi did find a teaching position at a TCV, yet another friend, who was working in one of the government offices, took her shopping, buying her two chuba

and wangchuk[3] for her to wear to her new job. I asked Yangkyi if these clothes were a gift or a loan and she replied that her friend helps her out financially now and then. Yangkyi went on to say that it is very nice of her since she doesn't feel as though she can tell her older sister, who also lives in India, when she needs money.

Among Semi-Orphans friends are a ubiquitous part of their everyday life. Upon leaving school, many will live with another Semi-Orphan who is better established until they are able to get on their feet financially. When I was working with Tenzin Dolma during my study, she lived with three different friends, staying with each for only a week. She kept most of her belongings in one friend's house but rotated between these three homes in order to never impose upon one person for too long. While she lived with these friends, she did much of the housework and cooking in return for a place to stay. I remember her telling me one day while we were sitting watching an Indian sitcom at one friend's apartment that she loved that particular friend's home. It made her dream about the day when she would have her own apartment.

Given the ubiquity of friends and friendship in the everyday lives of these Semi-Orphans, the fact that every collection given to me by these youth contains writings about friendship should not be surprising. In this corpus, friends and friendship appear in various forms of writing from personal letters to journal essays to text messages. In one letter, Tenzin Dolma wrote to a friend regarding her living arrangements:

> Even today, I am staying with my friend and after completing this month I am trying to find a room for myself. I hope I can do it very soon. Without doubt you can come to stay at my room if you visit Dharamsala again. [English]

Here Tenzin's 'even today' references the fact that for her staying with friends is a common practice, as it is for many Semi-Orphans. By implying that staying with friends is a habitual practice, Tenzin negotiates her place as a Semi-Orphan, not only is she reinforcing that this is a typical practice among members of this community but she is also placing herself in relation to this practice. Moreover, as an offer of housing to another

[3] A chuba is the traditional Tibetan one-piece dress consisting of a vest portion and long skirt that wraps around the body and is tied in back. A wangchuk is the blouse that is worn beneath the chuba to give the dress sleeves and usually a contrasting color. While Tibetan men rarely wear traditional clothing to work in the exile communities, the CTA and most Tibetan businesses require women to wear chuba and wangchuk to work.

Semi-Orphan friend, she not only normalizes such offers but also implicitly positively evaluates such forms of assistance.

Several of the text messages I received from Semi-Orphans also highlighted the importance and value of friendship in this community. The first is the full CTM from which the final line was excerpted above, both use repetition and shifts in the final lines to emphasize their value of friendship with the receiver.

> Its about friends
> friends are many, *some are* magical.
> *some are* tragedy.
> *some are* mysterious.
> *some are* comedians.
> but friend and people like you are really Oscar winner. [English]

This text message was supplied by Chödön, while the following was given to me by Yangkyi.

> Friend are amazing when they are *new*,
> they are wonderful when they are *true*.
> But do you know they are a "blessing" when they are like *you*. [English]

Such text messages are common among Semi-Orphans and, as we will see below, increasingly Born Refugees. I suggest because text messages circulate much more easily than many of the other forms of writing, that what at first was much more common among Semi-Orphans is spreading across the other youth communities of practice in McLeod Ganj. This is what Gee (1999) calls 'recognition work.' These Semi-Orphans are, through the circulation of such text messages, working to elevate the value of friendship among youth more generally.

Both of the above text messages allow the senders to position themselves with respect to the value and importance of friends and friendship. In these CTM, the senders rely upon syntactic repetition and/or emphatic stress to underscore their positive appraisal of friendship. They are similar to an excerpt analyzed in Tannen (1994, 50):

> *And he knows* Spanish,
> *and he knows* French,
> *and he knows* English,
> *and he knows* German,
> and HE is a GENtleman.

She suggests that the effect of such listing is twofold: (1) it gives the idea that the complete list is even longer; (2) more importantly, "The evaluative

effect of the list is to communicate that the speaker finds the length of the list impressive" (Tannen 1994, 50–51). Tannen also goes on to state that the variation found in the final line creates greater impact, reinforcing the speaker's positive evaluation. The first message, "It's about friends," above shares many qualities with the list from Tannen (1994). The listing alludes to an incompleteness in the list. There could be many more friends with many other qualities. The sender also implies that they think the myriad of 'friend types' is exceptional. And, lastly, the syntactic variation in the last line emphasizes that despite the multitude of possible friend types that the sender places their relationship with the receiver above all of these.

The second CTM also uses listing, albeit to a lesser extent, to convey the feeling that there are many friends with differing attributes. Most interestingly, however, is the use of rhyming at the end of each phrase (i.e. new, true, you) as well as the shared rhythm of the first two lines. The shift from the shared rhythm of the first two lines but the continuity in the rhyming pattern in the third line each serve as emphatic stress markers, adding emphasis on both the final rhymed word in the trio (i.e. you) as well as the final line of the message. This use of emphatic stress markers allows the sender of these messages to emphasize their evaluation of their friendship with the receiver by implying that being 'you' is better than being one of the many friends who are 'new' or 'true.'

Finally, in "Its about friends," the use of the emphatic stress marker 'really' as in '. . . really Oscar winner,' not only appraises the receiver as being of especially high quality but also allows the sender to emphasize their absolute certainty that the receiver possesses these qualities. Such certainty, in turn, allows the sender to positively appraise both the receiver and their shared friendship.

The writings among Semi-Orphans dealing with friends and friendship are different from those found in my Born Refugee corpus. Among Born Refugees, writings to and from friends tend toward financial and practical purposes. While this was also present in the Semi-Orphan writings, among Semi-Orphans positive affect also permeated writings circulated among friends. For Semi-Orphans, writing about these different aspects of friendship is part of being a member of this community of practice. Through their experience of exile, they have learned to rely on friends *as family*. Thus, as friendship is the core relationship for these youth, the presence and circulation of writings on and about friends and friendship allows them to place themselves as a Semi-Orphan. However, among Born

Refugees there is a trend to embed affect in writing to family but in writings to friends, affect retreats and requests for financial and employment assistance come to the fore.

'Thank you very much for the Shirt': Friendship among Born Refugees

In chapter seven, I suggested that, for Born Refugees, relationships with family members are more important than those with friends. I supported this claim both through an analysis of the Born Refugee corpus of writings, in which family is prominent, and through interview data, where fifty percent of Born Refugees stated that family is more important. Since Born Refugees most often grow up and live with their families well into their twenties, their placement of family as important in their lives is to be expected. However, more interesting than this expected dominance of family among these youth is that answer 'both' to the question "Which is more important family, friends, or both?" was also given by an equal number of Born Refugees. Figure 8-1 contains the percentages for each answer to this question.

I suggest that this high proportion of the answer 'both' indicates that friendship is becoming a valuable relationship among these youth. This possible trend is further bolstered by more than one-third of Born Refugees who also suggested that living without family in exile has both

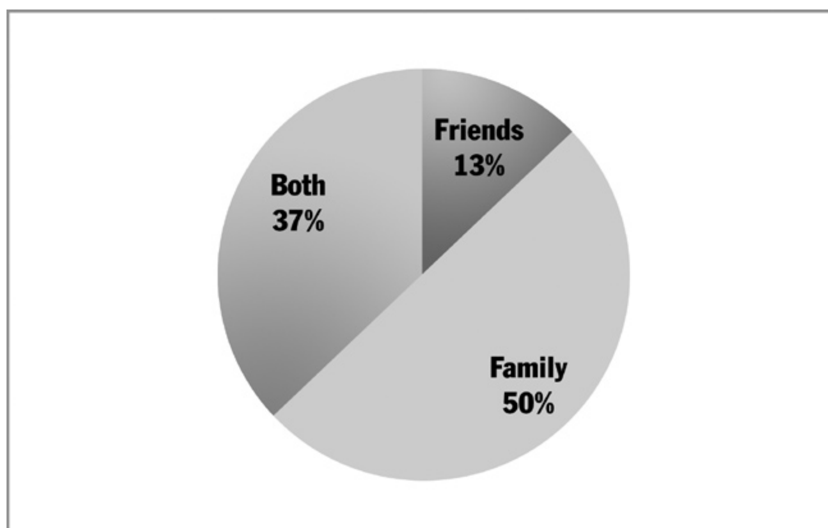


Figure 8-1: Which is more important?

advantages and disadvantages. Many saw such youth as being more independent and broad-minded specifically because they are not constrained by more conservative parents. Many stated that living without family places these youth in a position to take better care of themselves as adults than living with one's family does.

These ideas clearly contradict traditional Tibetan notions of the importance of family. I would not suggest, though, that among these Born Refugees the role of family is being significantly undermined by this increase in the value of friendship. Instead, I offer that for Born Refugees friends and family have come to fill roles that are complementary. More specifically, interactions with friends seem to be more pragmatic and less affective, while the inverse holds for relationships with family. In my interviews with Born Refugees, this pragmatic/affective bifurcation of roles as well as other such divisions of labor were often mentioned when these youth answered the question regarding the relative importance of family and friends.

Among the many comments this question engendered, one young woman who lives with her family in McLeod Ganj stated that family and friends are each important in different areas. She offered that friends are important for your social life, but your family "is part of you." Using more definitive terms, one young man said that friends and family are equally important; friends are important while at college, but family are important at home. Several youth talked about family as helpful in solving problems, suggesting that they are "more resourceful" and better at "giving solutions." Others however attributed greater affective involvement to family because of family members' greater concern for them. Friendship was most often cited as a sort of 'replacement' family when these youth are away from home for work, college, or other reasons. For instance, a young female Born Refugee told me "true friends always support you especially when you're away from family."

In the writings given to me by Born Refugees, such complementary roles were common. Probably the best example of this came from several e-mail exchanges one Born Refugee man, named Rinchen, had with both friends and family. In total, he included sixteen emails in his collection from several different exchanges, six emails between himself and his family and ten between himself and his friends. In examining these emails, the family emails broadly tend to deal with reports regarding school performance (i.e. potential problems) and more affective issues, such as hopes to see each other soon, worries about the other's health, and accounts of other family members' emotional states. One or two emails briefly

mentioned lending and borrowing money, but for the most part they were much more affective in nature.

The emails exchanged between friends, on the other hand, gravitate toward instrumental or functional purposes. For instance, some emails request assistance in finding employment or help with obtaining papers for migration abroad. Others include requests for favors, in particular, buying some article of clothing in Delhi, where clothing is cheaper, and bringing it to McLeod Ganj where the friend would be reimbursed. The email excerpt immediately below is typical of emails exchanged between Born Refugees in my corpus.

> Dear Sangyela,
> i am sorry that i couldn't be able to check mail for last 1 week. anyway, i will send you few postcard by tomarrow. i have bought some just now and will post it to u by tomarrow.
>
> i hope u too is busy with the work. thank you very much for the shirt. when are u coming up to mcleodganj, its getting cold these days and its always good to stay in the house rather than going around.
>
> . . .
>
> if you are coming in a month or so, we will be very thankful if u could get me and Dechen one coat, (second hand) for winter from the sector 27, old cloth shop. we will pay u when u reach here. here, coats and highneck sweater are very costly. if you find some nice thick coat or highneck for good price.
>
> I all for today, sorry for troubling you.
> With regards,
> Rinchen [English]

In this email Rinchen replies to an earlier request from his friend, Sangye, in Chandigarh to send him some postcards with Tibetan artwork on them, which are widely available in McLeod Ganj. He goes on to thank Sangye for having sent him a shirt and requests two coats or turtleneck sweaters for him and his girlfriend, Dechen. In the emails between Born Refugee friends in my corpus, messages tend toward more practical matters. There is some mention of personal matters (e.g. job satisfaction) but these tend to be brief portions.

In summary, friendship among Born Refugees patterns very differently than we saw in the previous section on Semi-Orphan friendships. Among Born Refugees, family remains central to their everyday lives. For members of this community of practice, writings to family gravitate toward affective dimensions of their relationship, using these ties to negotiate and recreate kinship relations. However, when writing to friends, Born Refugees rarely mention such affective ties, tending to focus on instrumental aspects of their relationship.

Through the dearth of affective interaction in their everyday writings with friends, these Born Refugees demonstrate the relative importance of these two forms of relatedness in their lives. Unlike Semi-Orphans for whom friends have become family, for Born Refugees family is present in their everyday lives even if only through phone calls or online chat sessions. While I would not suggest that Born Refugees do not have affective ties with their friends, it seems that at least in writing such affective dimensions are not being negotiated. Instead, friendship is being negotiated as a functional and practical relationship, possibly an important relationship that allows them to "stand on their own feet" even if to a lesser degree than their Semi-Orphan counterparts.

Friends and Family in the Tibetan Diaspora

Throughout this book, I have shown that typically Born Refugees' everyday practices and writings are the norm against which other youths' practices of shapshu, kyamkyam, and family are measured. In many ways, Born Refugees tend toward reproduction of the older generation's values in these three arenas. In chapter four, I argued that one way shapshu 'service' is understood by Tibetans in exile is through its instantiation as support for the Tibetan community through employment. Yet, not all types of employment are equal. Among many of the older generation, work for the CTA appears to be the only form of employment that counts as service. Similarly, for Born Refugees, being employed by the CTA also qualifies as the 'best' type of service.

In terms of kyamkyam, Born Refugees diverge from their elders in some ways, but continue to highly value most the most conservative form of youth kyamkyam, namely, kyamkyam as leisure. While all youth agree that kyamkyam is not just going for a walk, but most often includes activities with friends, youth raised in exile prefer kyamkyam that is engaged in neither for long periods of time nor frequently. This preferred form of kyamkyam among these youth demonstrates a shift away from their elders' notions of appropriate leisure time activities, but still is constrained in its duration and frequency.

Lastly, I discussed formulations and conceptions of family among Tibetan exile youth. For Born Refugees, as a community in which a large proportion of members have parents in exile, parental support and familial interactions are common. Thus, I suggested that for other youth in exile, namely, Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals, Born Refugees' interactions with family constitute the norm for these types of relations in the

Tibetan diaspora. The influence of these interactions on other exile youth can be seen through the continued importance of family over friends as expressed in interviews and everyday writings.

In each of these areas, New Arrivals' and/or Semi-Orphans' practices undergo an alteration through either drag or change. These processes of drag or change are influenced by the ways that Born Refugees engage in, talk about, and write regarding shapshu, kyamkyam, and family. In this chapter, we explored friendship relations across the three youth communities in McLeod Ganj. We learned that unlike these other areas, in the arena of friends Born Refugees' lives and literacy practices are in a state of shift toward according friendship greater symbolic capital. We also saw that this shift is due to several factors. The first of these factors stem from the changes that occurred throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, when McLeod Ganj experienced an influx of media and a rapid growth in accessibility and affordability of mobile phones. These changes brought in new ideas about friendship, through television shows, globally circulating chain text messages, and the like. These new ideas made more visible the social and economic successes attributable to friendships, particularly those among Semi-Orphans. This buttressing of these successes through globally circulating ideas about friendship has brought about an increased recognition of the value of friendship among Born Refugees.

The impact of these new media is not evenly distributed across all McLeod Ganj youth. Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, who grow up in India and have greater access to television and cell phones,[4] consume and reinterpret these messages regarding friendship. New Arrivals, however, are not exposed to these messages to the same extent. This unevenness of exposure is due to several factors: (1) New Arrivals often do not have or may not choose to allocate their resources such that they are able to purchase televisions; (2) they are frequently not as fluent in English as Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, and so have difficulty comprehending English language television shows; (3) many preferred to watch Tibetan and Chinese programs broadcast from China.[5] It is also my experience that fewer New Arrivals participate in the circulation of CTM. Thus, they

[4] This is not to say that all of these youth are wealthy or even economically stable. Instead, they have been socialized to certain tastes (Bourdieu 1984) and so tend to allocate their economic resources in ways that allow them this access.

[5] I suggest this preference is mainly attributable to the perspective that television viewing is a leisure activity. With higher Tibetan and Chinese fluencies, these programs do more than just remind these youth of home in Tibet, but are simply easier to understand and so more relaxing.

have not been exposed to the same messages regarding friendship, relying instead on their reformulation of Tibetan kyidug—though with few successes—to form friendships and create lasting social networks of support.

Let us return now to the writings discussed in this chapter, reviewing how these three communities do (and do not) draw upon friendship as a resource for negotiating community membership and identities. For New Arrivals, who are the most marginalized of all youth, family is negotiated as family-far. While they have a shared history with family, this history is not only wholly in the past but it is also rooted in Chinese Tibet. New Arrivals' friendships are almost always with other New Arrivals, making them less predictable and durable as these young people all search for their footing in their host country of India. Thus, friendship is not a resource for negotiating identities and community boundaries but at times yet another challenge to finding stability in their new lives.

In the Semi-Orphan corpus, friendship is ubiquitous. Analogous to the prevalence of work in the Born Refugee corpus we saw in chapter six, every Semi-Orphan I worked with not only talked about friendship but wrote about it, too. Writings that did deal with family did so in a way that involved little affect or, for the young woman who left an abusive household, included attempts to distance herself from her natal home. Yet, with regard to friendships, these writings demonstrated, through the prevalence of positive affect and evaluations, that friends for this community are a significant source of affective support.

Family among Born Refugees is negotiated in their writings in ways that present it as immediate and overwhelmingly positive. Their shared experiences with family reach into the past, as with the New Arrivals, but they also continue up to the present. Thus, family among Born Refugees is experienced as family-near. Writings about family are most often filled with positive affective expressions, constituting kin relations as central and valued in their everyday lives. While Born Refugee youth certainly spend more time with friends than many parents would prefer, their writings negotiate their friendships in much more practical terms, centering on everyday needs and assistance.

In sum, the divergent extents (Ochs 1996) to which these three youth communities negotiate relationships with friends and family in their writings and everyday lives function to recreate these divergent youth identities as well as reinforce the boundaries between them. In the case of New Arrivals, their reinstitution of Tibetan kyidug undergoes slippage as it is not taken up by other youth mainly because these kyidug are not successful

enough to accumulate their members the symbolic capital that would gain the attention of Born Refugees or Semi-Orphans.

Born Refugees' interactions with friends are becoming increasingly valued. I suggest that this shift in this socially dominant community of youth in McLeod Ganj is best seen as an instance of what I call drag. It is best viewed as drag since Semi-Orphans have been living in McLeod Ganj since soon after the beginning of the Tibetan exile communities in the 1950s. It is not the case that Semi-Orphans have only recently become socially and financially successful, for in one visit to McLeod Ganj, I was directed to two older shopkeepers in the main market who, as Semi-Orphans, run a very successful store and have done so for a long time. Instead, the change at the end of a very long period of drag occurred because other changes beginning in the early 1990s and originating outside the Tibetan exile community have significantly impacted youth living in McLeod Ganj. The liberalization of the Indian economy brought in differing ideas and new ethos through both television and mobile telephony. I offer that it is in light of these larger changes that the successes of Semi-Orphans, as solely reliant upon friend-based relationships, were reinforced through these new media. Therefore, despite Semi-Orphans' successes in previous years and decades, it is just now that they are becoming acknowledged and thus a shift in how Born Refugees view friendships is occurring.

CHAPTER NINE

REWRITING SHANGRI-LA

Through these stories of Tibetan youth living in McLeod Ganj, I have attempted to paint a picture of the different ways that migration has affected their lives. Even among those who have never migrated themselves, migration in this community—even if only vicariously—reaches far into the everyday lives of everyone in this village. For many youth migration is not only part of their past but is part of their present and possible futures.

Among the many youth I worked with, a large proportion have left McLeod Ganj and so migration continues to be part of their lives. For instance, Tenzin Dolma, whose parents entrusted her to one of the many Tibetan boarding schools when she was only five years old, at the end of my dissertation research took a teaching job in a remote region of Kashmir. In my last interview with her, she told me that the school was only accessible during the summer and solely by airplane. She also said that she would be the only Tibetan at school but that was okay because in her words she "liked a challenge." At about the same time, Lopsang, the New Arrival whose coworkers tried to teach me Amdo, married an American woman only to find himself in the United States and divorced after a few years. He had, however, achieved the dream of many Tibetan exiles. He became an American citizen and thus was able to get a passport. For many Tibetans, a passport from the United States or other developed country makes it easy for them to return to Tibet to visit family and friends.[1] In the summer of 2010, Lopsang, for the first time in almost ten years, returned to Tibet and visited his parents and siblings. And finally, Dikyi, whose cigarette list we analyzed in chapter one, after many years of being courted by a young Italian man both over the phone and on several of his visits to see her, left McLeod Ganj and has been living with him in Italy for the past several years.

Thus, migration is a theme that continues to play out in these young people's lives. Throughout the book I have highlighted the intersections between migration and shapshu, kyamkyam, family, and friends that figure

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[1] See Hess (2009) for a discussion of Tibetan exiles and citizenship.

prominently in the divisions and unities among youth living in McLeod. These new migrations that some of the youth in this book are now experiencing will certainly influence these and other spheres of their lives.

In examining these intersections between migration and their everyday lives I have attempted to present the complexities of life in McLeod Ganj. I have drawn from educational textbooks, historical sources, and, of course, the everyday writings that have been examined throughout this book. Unlike many other studies of the social life of literacy, I allowed my participants to tell me through their respective collections what writings were important to them. Like my reliance on various sources, I hoped to gain a broader picture of these youths' lives. Had I focused only on poetry or on text messages, I doubt I would have been able to see the different configurations of boundary making and remaking occurring in these communities.

More than just learning from their written pieces, my more than ten years of fieldwork in McLeod Ganj has allowed me to get to know many of these youth well and has significantly contributed to creating what I hope is a multifaceted account. And while many youth have left McLeod Ganj, I remain in touch with some of them through social media and e-mail. Several others continue to live in McLeod Ganj. During my frequent visits, we often catch up over tea or just chat in the street in the main market. As I've watched them grow into adults, develop careers, and/or have children, I see the importance of long-term involvements with communities or groups of participants. Over these years, several of these youth have become good friends. I can only hope to have done their stories justice here. For in my view their lives are not only good stories about everyday people, but in their sheer everydayness they are important stories, too.

Migration and Diasporic Literacies

In this ethnography, I have examined many different genres of everyday written language from poetry to text messages to personal journals and lists. By examining these diverse everyday writings it was my aim to work across boundaries to both question the utility of distinctions, such as schooled and non-schooled literacies, and demonstrate the category or genre in which a given writing can be placed is, at times, secondary to the social setting of its production and circulation. For more than producing a written piece for school or one's everyday life, it is the when and where as well as the histories of education and migration that inform the written pieces I have examined here. As we have seen throughout this

book, the everyday spheres of family and the like are negotiated across these boundaries and distinctions through writings, such as e-mails, lists, poetry, and homework assignments. Therefore, it is crucial to our understanding of the social meanings of literacy to work delicately around such categories, keeping an eye toward the meanings literacy has for those who we represent.

I suggest that in attempting to understand literacies among Tibetan youth in the McLeod Ganj, their writings should not be cast as school literacies or everyday literacies but instead they are first and foremost diasporic or exilic literacies. Being created not so much in particular places or social spheres (e.g. school or everyday), these writings emerge out of migration trajectories or in Paul Gilroy's (1993) words "roots and routes" of these youths' varied experiences of exile/diaspora to negotiate a here and now as Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, or New Arrivals, as Tibetan youth, and as youth in India. As messages that partially comprise diasporic discourses, they collaborate in the creation and reproduction of what James Clifford calls "alternative public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national [in McLeod read: Indian] time/space in order to live inside, with a difference" (Clifford 1994, 308). Yet, among these youth, the roots and routes out of which their experiences emerge do not constitute a unitary 'community consciousness.' The differing pasts and heritages (i.e. roots) as well as divergent presents along with the hopes, possibilities, and imaginaries of the future (i.e. routes) form the migration trajectories of these three youth communities (Berg 2009).

In McLeod Ganj where migration, displacement, and longing are continually renewed through various sources including schools, the CTA and the older generation, being in exile has become one of the defining characteristics of being Tibetan outside Tibet. Thus, as writings created and circulated in this highly politicized setting, exile is an ever-present if subtle characteristic of the writings I have examined. As diasporic literacies, these writings emphasize and highlight the varied migration trajectories of the Tibetan diaspora making salient the past, present, and futures of their migration and backgrounding all other literacy distinctions.

Identities in Interaction

In getting to know these Tibetan youth and looking at the identities they negotiate through their respective communities, we learned how contact across differing community identities can open up space for social change

to take place. In this investigation of youth identities and diasporic literacies, we answered the question of how identity development and negotiation takes place in McLeod Ganj. However, "just as important as understanding *how* identities are formed is understanding *why* they are formed" (Bucholtz and Hall 2006, 382).

Bucholtz and Hall (2006) offer that while identity has long been central to linguistic anthropology, little work has been done to understand the motivations for the negotiation of identities. Their essay attempts to make a start at remedying such a lacuna by developing what they call 'tactics of intersubjectivity.' They develop three pairs of tactics that are grounded in local, situated actions among actors, who are constrained by outside norms and forces, and emphasize the "agency and interactional negotiation" (Bucholtz and Hall 2006, 382) that is involved in identity formation. While these pairs of tactics are not necessarily discrete, resulting in the potential for overlap of applicability of these tactics in any given interaction, in this section I will focus only on one of these pairs of tactics, adequation and distinction.[2] This pair from among the three plays most prominently in interactions among Tibetan youth.

The process of adequation downplays difference in favor of sameness. This sameness may not be an exact replication, just sameness in the ways that are locally salient. This 'sufficient sameness' acknowledges that identity, be it adequation or distinction, is not something that exists prior to interaction, but instead is created through these interactions. Bucholtz and Hall use the term *adequation*, a blending of *equation* and *adequacy*, to highlight a particular type of sameness, one that allows for difference, but difference that is ignored. In the chapter on family, we can see where this adequation tactic was employed to create sameness across members of the Semi-Orphan community. Yangkyi, a Semi-Orphan with whom I worked, does not have the same family structure as the majority of her Semi-Orphan friends. Rather than having parents and siblings she did not know in Tibet, she is an 'actual' orphan having lost her parents when she was a small child. She and her two siblings grew up as Semi-Orphans at one of the many Tibetan exile boarding schools. In the time I spent with her, she seems to emphasize her sameness with her Semi-Orphan friends

[2] The remaining two pairs are authentication and denaturalization, and authorization and illegitimation. They describe these three pairs as foregrounding "a different use to which identity may be put: establishment of similarity and difference, of genuineness and artifice, and of legitimacy and disempowerment *vis-à-vis* some reference group or individual" (Bucholtz and Hall 2006, 383).

by relying upon them emotionally and financially, in place of her sisters. In this way, she achieves sufficient sameness in family structure through a pattern of reliance on friends that approximates those same patterns among other Semi-Orphans.

Distinction, as the pair to adequation, is the means through which locally prominent differences are created and/or made noticeable. Such a tactic can be used to create or police boundaries between communities or identities. It is not always a strategy of the powerful, but can also be used as a form of resistance. For instance, one day when I was conducting participant observation with Lopsang at the restaurant where he worked, I was talking with him and several of his coworkers, all of whom were New Arrivals and Amdo dialect speakers. One coworker insisted on my repeating all of my Lhasa Tibetan utterances after him in the Amdo dialect. In this attempt to teach me Amdo, he emphasized distinctive Amdo pronunciations of words. In doing so he was engaging in this tactic of distinction, marking speakers of the central and standard dialect as different.[3] In this example as in other instances of distinction, this strategy "has a tendency to reduce complex social variability to a single dimension: us versus them" (Bucholtz and Hall 2006, 384). And while there may be other tactics at work in McLeod Ganj, adequation and distinction are the important motivations behind the identities at play in this exile community.

In order to understand how these motivations are accomplished and how the negotiated identities can effect social change, I developed a framework for looking at such change. This framework brought together two well-known notions in anthropology: Sahlins's structure of the conjuncture and Lave and Wenger's community of practice. At the level of a community of practice, be it among Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, or New Arrivals, a collection of practices are negotiated among each community. Often phrased as "a shared repertoire of resources" (Wenger 1998) and encompassing practices of dress, speech, writing, posture, and a myriad of other possibilities, any one practice can be metonymic of all others. That is, by drawing upon these resources an individual can evoke many or all of the practices in a repertoire associated with a given community. In this ethnography, I focused on several clusters of literacy practices wherein each community of practice has negotiated how and about what one should write.

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[3] He also was engaging in something of an adequation tactic through his attempt to prompt me to speak Amdo instead of Lhasa Tibetan.

In a community of practice, a group's identity emerges out of regular interactions with other members. Moreover, through these regular interactions individuals are socialized to the community's shared repertoire of practices. "The individual's identity emerges in the process of articulation and resolution of participation in . . . communities of practice, and each community of practice's identity emerges through its participants' joint engagement in this process" (Eckert 2000, 36). It is this identity, negotiated through participation in a community of practice, that provides the basis for tactics of adequation and distinction. More specifically, writing about and from work, as a shared resource in the Born Refugee repertoire, not only negotiates the author's identity as a Born Refugee but also adequates and distinguishes the author with Born Refugees and from other non-Born Refugee youth, respectively.

As these tactics of adequation and distinction imply, communities of practice do not exist in isolation. In fact, Eckert (2000) as well as all other theorists who have utilized this framework have noted that one of its great strengths is that it allows for an individual's membership in multiple communities of practice. Nevertheless, there seems to be little said about interactions between communities who share few if any members. For although none of the communities of practice in McLeod Ganj are wholly distinct from the others, there are often interactions between particular individuals each of which hold membership in just one of these youth communities. Thus, in this small and densely populated village, one cannot avoid semi-regular contact with other communities' members.

So, then, to borrow from Sahlins, what is the structure of this conjuncture? How do individuals with partially distinct collections of practices interact? Sahlins suggests that when there are "partially distinct concepts and projects" (Sahlins 1981, 68), that is, conflicts in how things should be done, interpreted, or intended, there is a sort of 'working out' of difference. This working out of difference is Sahlins's social change. For our purposes, when different judgments in what can be written about and how one should go about writing it come into contact, each party is opened up to new practices, to another community's shared repertoire. And here we see a chance for social change. It is in this space where these divergent concepts and projects, or more concretely differing shared repertoires of resources, come into contact that a new way of interacting (i.e. the structure of the conjuncture) may emerge. When the structure of the conjuncture changes a community's shared repertoire (e.g. how and if they write about friendship) these shifts impact the group's and individuals' identities as members of a particular community of practice. In sum, to take

us back to the start of this section, the shared resources of a community of practice provide individuals with parameters for adequation and distinction in interactions with the youth of other communities. Depending on the success of engaging in either tactic, these youth may bring about changes in repertoires and identities that constitute social change.

Gauging the Pace of Change

I remember the first time I read Sahlins's *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* as a graduate student. I had already been reading Bourdieu's work and was steeped in change that seemed so slow and reproduction that appeared to hold tightly onto the status quo. In contrast, Sahlins theories felt wide open to change. Reading his short book was exciting and exhilarating. I was charmed by the subtlety of change he described. Sherry Ortner captures the character of Sahlins's framework in her explanation of its workings, "Change comes about when traditional strategies, which assume traditional patterns of relations, . . . are deployed in relation to novel phenomena . . . which do not respond to those strategies in traditional ways" (Ortner 1984, 155). In this perspective change is not a revolution, but instead a multitude of adjustments in one's everyday interactions.

As I quickly progressed through this elegant view of change by Sahlins, I was disheartened to see this framework that I had found so exciting become increasingly automatic and mechanistic. There seemed to be an inherent almost hollowness in this model. This hollowness stemmed mainly from the only two paths for change: change and failed change (a.k.a. reproduction). I agreed with Ortner's critique that "there are probably far more linkages, and far more possibilities of slippage, in the route leading back from practice to structure than Sahlins's relatively smooth account allows for" (Ortner 1984, 157). In many ways, Sahlins seemed to stop short of making his theory much more broadly applicable.

In this study of Tibetan youth, literacy, and social change I have attempted to remedy this mechanistic aspect of Sahlins's theory. I have suggested differing paces of change and in doing so have both agreed with Sahlins and built upon his work. I do concur that some changes happen quickly, especially among young people who are just becoming adult actors and interacting with the world in new ways for the first time.[4] In

[4] See also Cole's (2004) discussion of Mannheim's ([1952] 1997) "fresh contact."

addition, working in an exile community with an almost continual trickle of new exiles, I see that change for many of these older and younger New Arrivals occurs in ways that Sahlins described. Therefore, in retaining the pace that I call 'change' I retain much of Sahlins's description of social change.

However as many have said not all change occurs in this way. Sometimes responses to traditional patterns occurring in novel situations go unnoticed or are disregarded. This process that I call, borrowing from Ortner (1984), 'slippage' diverges from Sahlins's reproduction as failed change. To think of slippage as failed change implies that an attempt to induce social change has occurred. While this may be the case, I suggest that it is more often that the actors involved simply do not notice subtle differences in their responses to traditional patterns. Thus, this model more explicitly allows for unintentional reproduction.

Such unintentional reproduction may at some point in the future be retrospectively seen not as slippage but what I have come to name 'drag'. After iterations of nontraditional responses, even over generations (as we saw in chapter eight's discussion of friendship), what seemed to be slippage may show itself to have been a slow drag. I would suggest that drag may prove to be the most common pace of social change. For as Ortner said "mature actors are not all that flexible" (Ortner 1984, 156). Few changes occur as quickly as Sahlins suggested, but more often they emerge slowly through what Raymond Williams (1977) called structures of feeling. Structures of feeling are defined by Laura Ahearn as "nascent changes in meanings and values" (Ahearn 2001, 53) and as such may remain latent in the society for years or generations. It is only once they become more regularized and established in everyday life that change can occur. Thus, this notion of drag incorporates these structures of feeling as part of the process through which social change eventually occurs.

Through these differing paces of change I have attempted to provide a model that better fleshes out how social change occurs. I hope that through this introduction of slippage and drag as well as the linking of Sahlins with Lave and Wenger's communities of practice not only reinvigorates Sahlins's elegant theory but also makes it more widely applicable to how actors "with distinct concepts and projects" (Sahlins 1981) subtly affect social change.

Everyday Spheres of Transformation

In McLeod Ganj, two pairs of domains of everyday life figure prominently, namely shapshu & kyamkyam and family & friends. As pairs of social arenas they are not necessarily separate or discontinuous. In important ways, for instance, family and friends shape one's access to shapshu and kyamkyam. For youth with family, especially parents, in exile often find work leading to service through family or other kin relations. But also family often constrains youths' conceptions of and engagement in kyamkyam. On the other hand, youth without family in exile who rely on friendships have fewer opportunities for finding high-service jobs. These schoolmates on whom they rely are often only slightly older, and thus are not well established themselves. However, without elders at home telling them about the dangers of kyamkyam to their reputation, these youths have many fewer restrictions on how they engage in this activity. These pairings figure importantly in the everyday life of McLeod Ganj residents. They are spheres where identities are negotiated and as we saw where social transformations can occur.

Shapshu & Kyamkyam

While both of these pairings are drawn upon to negotiate divisions among youth in McLeod Ganj, they do not divide these youth into the same groupings. Shapshu and kyamkyam are used to negotiate divisions based on where one lived during their adolescence. Therefore, they are used to divide New Arrivals from both communities of Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans. As important spheres of everyday life that are not evenly accessible, this unevenness opens up spaces for differing 'concepts and projects' to come into contact, contacts that can influence social changes.

Among the four spheres discussed in this section, shapshu is the single most important in McLeod Ganj. It is tied to the nationalist project of the Tibetan exile communities and functions to focus Tibetan exiles inward away from the larger Indian society in which this community is embedded. Shapshu, though, has undergone significant changes in the past twenty years, especially in the decade following the US-Tibet Resettlement Project in 1991. From about this time on several changes occurred that directly impacted the youth on whom this book focuses. It was during this period that the CTA recognized that they would no longer be able to hire many of the qualified Tibetans emerging out of secondary and post-secondary institutions. What's more, the US-Tibet Resettlement Project as well as

several other visa lotteries for Tibetans not only moved Tibetans to countries outside India, but also began what one of my participants called the Go West Virus. Thus, such projects and programs oriented these youth outward from the Tibetan exile communities. And lastly, the influx of the Internet and other media brought regular Tibetans into contact with much of the world.

I argued that these transformations in McLeod Ganj brought about an expansion of the meaning of shapshu to include not only work for the CTA but other forms of employment that were judged to serve the Tibetan community more broadly. Today, one can serve the Tibetan community by blogging about the Chinese occupation, raising awareness of Tibet's cause by starting a national beauty pageant, and even moving abroad as an ambassador for the Tibetan cause.[5] The most accessible form of shapshu remains employment that contributes to the Tibetan exile communities. However, this reinterpretation of what kinds of activities constitute shapshu has introduced something of a shapshu continuum, ranging between low-service work and high-service work.

While the youth I spoke with broadly agree on the general ranking of various forms of employment along this shapshu continuum, the specific distributions of employment differ. Among Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, CTA employment, as high-service employment, is distinguished from all other types of employment. Conversely, among New Arrivals work in the Indian sector (e.g. driver for an Indian family) or employment associated with China (e.g. vendor of goods from China) is distinguished from all other forms of work. These differences are attributable to the differential access to a formal education, leaving New Arrivals without the requisite diplomas and education to secure what Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans consider high-service employment. Thus, through their inclusion of other forms of employment toward the high-service end of the continuum, New Arrivals validate, in terms of shapshu, the work to which they have access.

Kyamkyam, as the pair of shapshu, divides youth in McLeod Ganj along similar lines. Among these Tibetan youth kyamkyam creates divisions based on acceptable parameters of duration and frequency for participating in this activity. To engage in kyamkyam a few times a week and only for an hour or so is to experience kyamkyam as leisure. Alternately, participating

[5] See Hess (2009) for a discussion of being an ambassador for the Tibetan cause through migration to and citizenship in the United States.

in kyamkyam anytime of the day, for longer durations, and on a daily basis is to experience it as a lifestyle. Discourses in McLeod Ganj regarding kyamkyam favor engaging in it as leisure but not as a lifestyle. Kyamkyam as leisure is practiced mainly among Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, while kyamkyam as lifestyle is attributed mainly to New Arrivals.

Engaging in kyamkyam as lifestyle or leisure, though, is not simply a matter of individual choice. Instead, I argue that it is closely related to shapshu. When kyamkyam is leisure, it is seen as a reward for the work of serving the Tibetan community. As lifestyle, it is thought to be the practice of freeloaders, who are called in Tibetan *kyamki* 'wandering dogs,' and do not contribute to the Tibetan community through their service. Such notions of the relative value of kyamkyam as leisure or lifestyle do not take into account the important role that kyamkyam often plays for New Arrivals. Kyamkyam for these youth is often not just a means of relaxing but a way of establishing friendships and connections in a community where they are relatively new.

In these everyday spheres of shapshu and kyamkyam, New Arrivals' experiences of and writings about them not only reflect their marginalized position in the community but they also reinforce and re-create it. Among Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, shapshu and kyamkyam position them relatively advantageously in community discourses. Such divergent experiences of these two important social arenas in McLeod Ganj conflict when they come into contact. However, the paucity of writings about and from work among New Arrivals demonstrates slippage in their interactions with Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans, but not one that is due to these youths' disregarding of the importance of work in conceptions of shapshu. Instead, these youth have attempted to shift the meaning of shapshu in order to include work to which they have access.

Family & Friends

Shapshu and kyamkyam are relied upon to divide youth where their migration trajectories differ most prominently. For in this arena Born Refugees' and Semi-Orphans' migration trajectories overlap with each other but diverge from those of New Arrivals'. In the spheres of friends and family, though, all three communities are divided. In terms of family, these relations are negotiated as family-near, family-absent, and family-far across Born Refugees, Semi-Orphans, and New Arrivals, respectively. For although New Arrivals and Semi-Orphans both lack parents and/or family in exile, these differing orientations to family strongly influence the

symbolic capital they accumulate. Semi-Orphans' family-absent obscures the lack of family through its nonexistence in their writings. Family-far, inversely, makes prominent New Arrivals' lack of family in exile by emphasizing these youths' continuing ties to family in Chinese Tibet. Thus, because Semi-Orphans' families are absent in their writings, this nonconformity slips past as unnoticed or at most minimally noticeable. Conversely, family-far brings to the fore New Arrivals' divergent configurations of family. Not only do these family structures differ from the perceived norm, they link these youth to present-day Tibet, a locale thought of in exile as 'polluted' through its Sincization.

These differences in orientation to family, bolstered by the centrality of family in Tibetan society both historically and in the present, place Born Refugees' family-near as the norm for family relationships in exile. By viewing these relationships, all other exile youth learn to value family as embodied in Born Refugees' families. For all exile youth the concept of family figures prominently. They see Born Refugees' lives as more financially and emotionally secure due to the co-residence of family in the exile communities. Thus, despite negotiating family as near, far, and absent, these youth share an ideology of family as not only necessary but valued.

Yet, just as the events of the 1990s and early 2000s helped to shift what is meant by shapshu in the Tibetan exile communities, so too, have these events augmented the value of friendship among these youth. During this period, a confluence of media images and messages began to highlight the usefulness and reward of friendship. Importantly Semi-Orphans, who have relied on friendships in place of family, most closely embody these media images of youth creating close, successful relationships with friends. Born Refugees even seem to envy them, especially those Semi-Orphans who have achieved social and financial success. Thus, unlike the other everyday spheres in which Born Refugees are dominant, here we see an emergent value on friendship. However, we do not see friendships replacing family among Born Refugees, but rather that a division of roles across kin and non-kin relations seem to be emerging.

Despite the ubiquity of friends in the everyday lives of Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals, this augmentation of the value of friendship is based on the experiences of Semi-Orphans and not those of New Arrivals. This is surprising because New Arrivals, living in a town where cultural preservation is a chief concern, are attempting a refashioning of traditional Tibetan kyidug 'association' based in friendship instead of the familial networks that form the foundation for established kyidug in McLeod Ganj. However, these efforts are rarely recognized outside of the New Arrival

community both because of these youths' marginalization in McLeod Ganj and due to a lack of success of these friend-based kyidug.

In summary, in terms of family and friends, Born Refugees and Semi-Orphans each advantageously negotiate their position in their respective spheres. In terms of family, Semi-Orphans and New Arrivals conceptualize Born Refugees' families as the valued norm, while, in terms of friendship, Born Refugees are beginning to value friendship as embodied in Semi-Orphans more.

Rewriting Shangri-La

I chose the title Rewriting Shangri-La for this book with two objectives in mind. The first was to highlight the influence of the Shangri-La myth that, despite the efforts of Tibetan intellectuals as well as academics, appears to persist in educational discourses and, so, in many young people's pictures and perceptions of Tibet and Tibet in exile. Secondly, I contend that these youth are rewriting and reimagining this myth. This rewriting of Shangri-La, however, does not take on the proportions of a utopia. Instead, Shangri-La today in McLeod Ganj is being rewritten through family and friends, shapshu and kyamkyam.

For even if unknowingly, many of these youth are taking the advice proposed by Kunsung at the outset of this ethnography. From my vantage point, these youth have "let go of this dream of Shangri-La" and are making "the best out of their life." I see in their everyday lives and writings the usual triumphs, defeats, challenges, and successes that most on the planet know. In this way, they are rewriting Shangri-La in quite mundane terms, contrary to the way many across the globe want to see Tibetans. For these youth, who are as Donald Lopez (1999) suggests "prisoners of Shangri-La," have redecorated their 'utopia'—complete with happiness and sorrow—and are tailoring to fit their experiences as youth in exile.

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INDEX

Note: Page numbers in *italics* refer to illustrations.